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VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 19328 WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 1996

**Money**  
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★ Will the economic summit in Casares be worthwhile?  
★ Will Korean unification ruin the nation?  
It's all in the Money Magazine TODAY

## Jordanian PM makes surprise visit to Israel

Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul-Karim Kabariti made an unexpected visit to Israel last night in an apparent prelude to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's trip to Egypt tomorrow.  
Officials in the Prime Minister's Office said the meeting was initiated by Kabariti, who earlier in the day visited Egypt. After the meeting, Kabariti told reporters that he briefed Netanyahu on his earlier meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shara. (Story, Page 2)  
The meeting, which included top aides from both sides, was held at the Prime Minister's Office in Tel Aviv.  
Arab officials and European governments have looked to Jordan, due to Anoman's close relationship to the Netanyahu government, to convey its

concern about Israel's peace policies.  
Therefore, there is speculation that after prior consultation in Cairo yesterday, the Arabs urged Kabariti to visit Israel in a bid to help prepare for the visit and ensure a successful outcome to Netanyahu's trip to Egypt.  
Netanyahu, announced yesterday that steps would be taken imminently to ease the closure on the territories.  
Other moderate Arab countries have reacted warily to Netanyahu. Earlier this week, Gulf states joined Egypt and Syria in issuing a statement voicing deep concern about Netanyahu's peace policies. Moreover, the Moroccan government refused to let Netanyahu's plane stopover in Rabat on the way back from the US.  
The meeting between Netanyahu and Mubarak will be the prime minister's first

meeting with an Arab head of state since his election on May 29.  
However, before the Netanyahu-Mubarak meeting, Western diplomats conveyed greater skepticism about whether the Netanyahu government is serious about engaging substantively with the Palestinians or rather wants to merely reap public relations gains.  
They say there is a pattern of the premier dispatching his foreign policy adviser, Dore Gold, to meet with top Palestinians only on the eve of a major event such as the Arab summit and the Netanyahu visit to Washington. Yesterday a meeting took place between Gold and top Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas.

Sources say that in the meeting yesterday Gold did not convey any information about easing the closure. An official in the Prime Minister's Office said last night that he did not think that specifics had been decided upon yet, and that this would be left to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.  
It is known that Civil Administration officials have favored sharply increasing the number of Palestinian workers allowed to work inside Israel and have favored the use of IDF escort convoys to enable the safe passage of Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza.  
"It will be gradual and subordinate to security considerations," an official from Netanyahu's office said.  
Sources said the IDF had presented a list of suggested steps to take to ease the

closure. These include issuing more work permits to the tens of thousands of Palestinians seeking employment in Israel and increasing the amount of produce and goods allowed to pass in and out of the territories.  
The current closure has been in effect since the wave of suicide attacks began in February. Since the elections it has been eased gradually. Today some 25,000 Palestinian laborers are permitted to pass daily to their jobs in Israel, but these have been restricted to include only middle-aged, married workers.  
In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns welcomed the announcement. He said President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher had urged an easing during  
(Continued on Page 2)



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu meets his Jordanian counterpart, Abdul-Karim Kabariti (left) in Tel Aviv last night. (Israel Sun)

## 400,000 workers strike today

THE economy will grind to a halt today as some 400,000 workers strike from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., as part of the Histadrut and labor unions' protest against the government's economic program.  
The strike in the public sector is to encompass all government ministries, local authorities, public hospitals, banks and the stock market. For Bank Hapoalim, it will be the first strike in 75 years. Disruptions are expected in train and bus schedules.  
Histadrut Chairman MK Amir Peretz convened the leaders of the

**MICHAL YUDELMAN**  
large unions and labor council secretaries for an emergency meeting last night for last-minute instructions on the strike and the mass demonstration the Histadrut is to hold today at 11 a.m. outside the Knesset.  
Last night, the Tel Aviv Regional Labor Court issued an injunction forbidding the Ports and Railway Authority, the Airports Authority, and El Al from striking. The Histadrut said it would appeal the decision. The

judge said, however, that authority workers would be able to leave work to attend the Histadrut rally today.  
The Jerusalem Regional Labor Court was to rule last night on a petition by the Banking Association against the strike. The court yesterday refused the Manufacturers Association's petition for an injunction against the strike, but limited the strike in the industrial sector to two hours.  
Histadrut leaders expressed satisfaction with the ruling, noting  
(Continued on Page 2)

## Hizbullah reportedly releasing bodies of two MIAs today

HIZBULLAH will today hand over the bodies of two Israeli MIAs, presumably those of Yosef Fink and Rahamin Alsheikh, to a representative of the German government, Israel Radio reported, quoting a source in the Lebanese government.  
The bodies will be exchanged for Shi'ite Moslem

prisoners held by Israel, Hizbullah said yesterday.  
French news agencies said last night that Bernd Schmidbauer, the top intelligence aide to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, would be arriving in Beirut today to handle the exchange.  
Earlier report, Page 12

### Who is striking?

**MICHAL YUDELMAN**

- STATE hospitals and Magen David Adom will operate with only an emergency staff. Kupat Holim Clalit, including all its clinics and offices, will be on strike all day.
- All government ministries, including income tax, customs and VAT offices, will be closed for the day, as will municipal and local authority offices, National Insurance Institute offices and employment bureaus.
- All the banks, the Bank of Israel, postal agencies and the stock market will be on strike.
- Israel Radio and Channel 1 may strike for part of the time.
- No university exams will be held; Na'amat and WIZO centers and offices will be closed; municipal summer schools will be closed, though private ones will operate as usual.
- The Israel Museum will be closed.
- Egged and Dan will operate their lines with cooperative members only; hired drivers and workers will be on strike.
- The Tnuva, Strauss and Tara dairies will not supply shops with merchandise. The Histadrut is trying to get chain stores to strike. Private shops will be open as usual.
- Hotels will operate on a Shabbat schedule, without serving lunch or providing room service.
- Tel Aviv lifeguards will be on strike.
- Bezeq, the Fire Service, the Israel Electric Corporation and Mekorot will operate on an emergency basis. Pending a court ruling, it was unclear last night whether Ben-Gurion Airport, El Al, Arkia, Eilat Airport, and the ports would be on strike. El Al has rescheduled its flights around the strike.
- Although the strike is to last only 10 hours, disruptions are expected to continue at least until midnight. Traffic jams are expected on the road to Jerusalem between 9:30 and 10:30 this morning, as 300 buses hired by the Histadrut will head for Jerusalem, carrying some 10,000 workers to demonstrate outside the Knesset.

### Treasury announces bond-buying plan

**DAVID HARRIS and news agencies**

SHARES on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange plummeted yesterday, with the Two-Sided Index falling 4.5%, and the Maof Index losing 5.25%. It was the 10th consecutive day that the market dropped.

The Treasury and the Bank of Israel yesterday agreed on measures they hope will help stabilize the capital market. This stability is crucial for the business sector to continue raising capital.

The central bank says it plans to institute a guaranteed minimum return for provident funds. This is aimed at preventing fund members from redeeming shares and forcing the funds to sell stocks to meet the redemptions.

In a joint statement, the two bodies announced that the Bank of Israel will buy inflation-linked  
(Continued on Page 2)

### For the strong-stomached, stock bargains abound

**COMMENT**

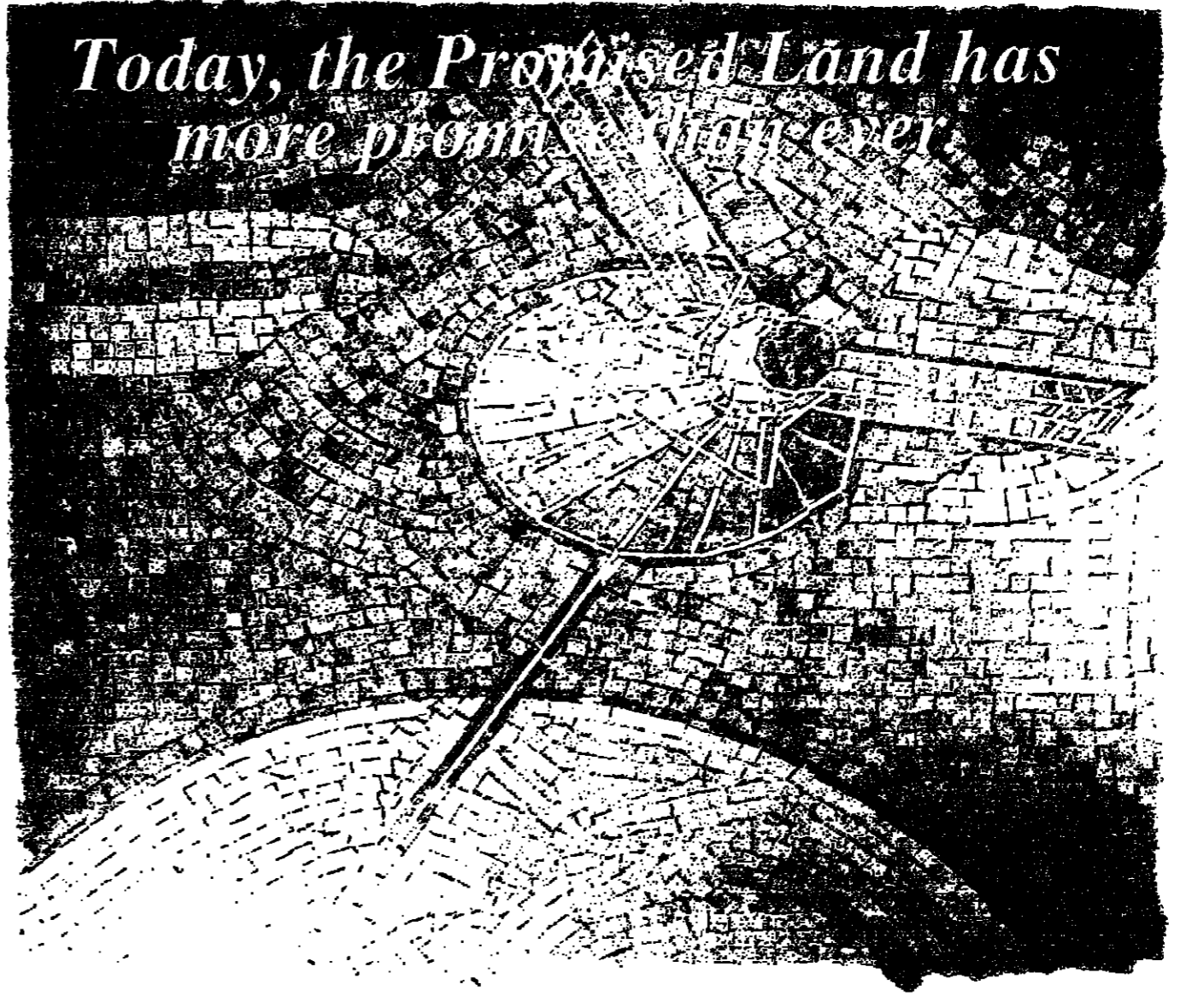
**NEIL COHEN**

THE market is collapsing for three reasons:

- 1) Panicked investors have been dumping stocks indiscriminately. In particular, provident and mutual funds have been hit by heavy redemptions - savers asking for their money back, forcing the funds to liquidate positions to raise cash. When there are more sellers

than buyers prices fall. Markets are driven by greed and fear. Right now we are in fear mode.

- 2) High interest rates hit the market with a double whammy. By making capital more expensive, they hurt corporate profits. And by offering savers high returns on risk-free bank deposits  
(Continued on Page 8)



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# Syrian FM warns Israel: Don't change direction of peace process

SYRIA said yesterday that the Arab world would reject any Israeli attempt to change the ground rules in Middle East peace negotiations.

"Any attempt to violate or change the basis of the peace process will not succeed," Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shara told reporters in Cairo after a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Shara also met with Jordanian Prime Minister Abdullah Karim Kabariti yesterday.

Shara said the leaders of Egypt and Jordan would remind Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of the already agreed upon principles of peace in his upcoming meetings with them. Netanyahu is expected in Egypt tomorrow and is due to visit Jordan a week later.

"Land for peace is something we agreed upon and there will be no change in it. President Mubarak will repeat that and I am sure that [Jordan's] King Hussein also will repeat that. We will continue to insist on a just and comprehensive peace based on the land for peace formula," Shara said.

Kabariti, whose country has had to fend off Arab criticism that it has been too quick to make up with Israel, said Netanyahu's tough policies have alarmed his country.

"Netanyahu's statements worry us a lot especially when it

HILLEL KUTTLER  
and news agencies

comes to issues related to Jerusalem and to settlements," Kabariti said.

"However, he stated clearly that Israel will be committed to whatever agreement they have signed or arrived at with the Arab parties and we believe that respecting those agreements will be the basis for hope that the peace process will continue."

"We want to listen to Netanyahu and not to judge his policies and direction from his statements and speeches," he said.

"Jordan views the peace process in a comprehensive way and there is no peace process without it being comprehensive... peace must refer to principles of international resolutions and the land for peace principle," Kabariti added.

The US's special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross will return to the region next week for consultations with the key players in the peace process, a senior US official said yesterday.

Ross will bring a letter from President Bill Clinton to Syrian President Hafez Assad assuring him of the US's

commitment to helping restart Israeli-Syrian talks, he said.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the US peace team visited Israel and Egypt three weeks ago, before Netanyahu's inaugural visit to the US. The official said that while Christopher had planned a longer visit to the region this summer, it is not now in the works.

Letters also were delivered in recent days to Mubarak, Morocco's King Hassan II, King Hussein and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, the official said. Such letters are often sent to Arab leaders following a visit by an Israeli prime minister when there is uncertainty in the Arab world about an Israeli position, he explained.

The official said the letters reiterated, in part, that "our position on this issue [settlements] has not changed - that we still see it as a problem," he said.

The US sees tomorrow's scheduled Mubarak-Netanyahu meeting as an opportunity for Netanyahu to assure the Arab world that he wants to keep them "on board" in the peace process, and for Mubarak to convey those concerns, the official said.

However, the US played no role prior to the Cairo meeting, he added.

Mubarak is due to meet with Clinton on July 30.

# Barak attacks Netanyahu government for economic crisis

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

THE crisis in the capital market is not a reaction to the interest rates or the draining of the provident funds, "but to the confusion, lack of direction and internal contradiction radiated by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu," Labor MK Ehud Barak said yesterday.

In his first attack on Netanyahu and his government, former foreign minister Barak said that only a determined continuation of the peace process will reinstate domestic and international confidence in Israel's economy. "Not nocturnal meetings but a courageous policy by daylight on economic, security and foreign affairs, that's what the state needs to stabilize the capital market," he said.

Barak called on Netanyahu "to climb down immediately from the lofty election slogans on economic and security matters and return to the firm earth of reality."

He urged Netanyahu to issue a statement right away setting a date for his meeting with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat and for the redeployment in Hebron, and to hold a down-to-business discussion with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on the continuation of the peace process.

These moves will contribute to

rebuild the confidence in Israel's government both in Tel Aviv and on Wall Street - no less than reducing the interest rate by .5% to 1%, he said.

Labor MK Haim Ramon blasted the government's economic policy "which in one month deteriorated the stock market by 15%. This is the public's real opinion on its government."

Ramon upheld the Histadrut and workers' right to strike against the government's anticipated economic measures, noting that "the government must negotiate with the body which represents more than 600,000 workers and pensioners, who are the main victims of the economic program."

He dismissed the arguments that the strike is premature, stressing "the cabinet has made decisions which oblige the coalition, that is a very serious thing indeed. The government should have negotiated with the Histadrut before doing so."

"The Histadrut showed understanding for the economic situation and was ready to be a partner to the budget cuts, if the government would negotiate a just and correct economic and social policy. But the government rejected this approach."

# Shahak's trip to Russia postponed

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

RUSSIA'S new government has canceled a visit there later this month by Chief of General Staff Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the army said. Reports from Russia attributed this to the internal upheaval in the Russian military brass resulting from the recent elections there.

A Defense Ministry official confirmed that Shahak was to have visited Russia sometime this month, but that the trip was delayed. The official declined to speculate as to why.

"It was postponed a bit, that is all," the official said.

The IDF spokesman also declined to comment on the reason.

The Foreign Ministry curiously claimed they knew of no planned visit by the chief-of-staff to Russia.

The visit most likely would have dealt with the two-year defense memorandum signed between the two countries last December during a visit here by then-Russian defense minister Pavel Grachev.

The agreement covered an array of issues, including research and development of advanced avionics systems and combat jet upgrading technologies. It was hoped that joint projects would have been advanced by Shahak's visit.

Since the agreement, Russian President Boris Yeltsin has replaced Grachev with Alexander Lebed. This change has left the Russian defense establishment in a state of uncertainty.

It is expected that Shahak's visit will be rescheduled once a new Russian defense minister is named. However, the cancellation may also be a sign of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's position.

Yesterday, following a meeting in Moscow with his Egyptian counterpart Amr Moussa, Primakov said Russia was determined to "keep the peace process alive."

Primakov's deputy Viktor Posvalyuk said that Moscow is eyeing a bigger role in Middle East peacemaking.

# Eitan examines security procedures at Gaza crossing

AGRICULTURE Minister Rafael Eitan visited the Border Police base in Kiryat Gat yesterday to examine the security arrangements in place on the Gaza border and in the Mount Hebron area.

He also visited the Kami crossing point in Gaza, where he was briefed on the security arrangements and procedures for transferring goods from the Strip.

"The problem is not just security but the quality of produce and preventing the spread of disease," Eitan said. "I have not yet drawn any conclusions. I will study the matter and then decide about changes."

Eitan met with Haim Tamous, the Palestinian in charge of the Kami crossing, and they discussed the possibility of easing the closure.

Eitan said he would like to help the Palestinian farmers, and, if invited, would travel to Gaza to meet with Palestinian Authority agriculture officials.

He said the water problems in the PA-controlled territories could be solved by erecting desalination plants in Gaza and in the Beit She'an area. As for the present, he said, "If there's no water, there's no water; we have no other water sources."

He suggested that the Palestinians invite Israeli agricultural experts to check Palestinian produce while it is still in the fields, which he said would go a long way toward preventing produce from being rejected for import at the Kami crossing.

If produce were checked before being packed, it "could be brought in immediately without being checked at Kami," he said.

Tamous welcomed the idea and said he hoped he would be able to implement it.



Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav (right) is briefed on the security situation in Hebron while climbing to an observation point to view the Machpela Cave yesterday. "There needs to be a continual string of settlement between Hebron and Kiryat Arba," he said.

# Husseini to lead protest against rezoning of eastern Jerusalem park

BILL HUTMAN

A DEMONSTRATION is slated to occur in an eastern Jerusalem park today to protest plans to rezone the park and turn it over to a Jewish developer.

Palestinians have charged that the park, located on Nablus Road in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, sits on about five dunams which were expropriated from a Palestinian landowner.

The municipality spokesman said that the

municipality recently discovered that part of the park was built on two dunams of land owned by a Jewish landowner, and that it is being returned to him. The spokesman added that PLO official Faisal Husseini, who organized the protest, is exaggerating the importance of the project. He pointed out that due to zoning regulations only

about 1.1 dunams could be built upon.

Several dozen Palestinian children, as well as Husseini, are expected to participate in the demonstration.

The Peace Now-affiliated Ir Shalem group is also supporting the protest. Ir Shalem is filing a petition with the local planning board today against the plan to rezone the park, a spokesman said.

## Two killed on Modi'in road

TWO people were killed and five injured in traffic accidents on the Givat Ze'ev-Modi'in highway yesterday. A pregnant woman was killed when two cars collided near Beit Horon. Four people were also injured in the accident, two seriously and two moderately. Shortly afterward, a car and truck collided near Reut. The car's driver was killed.

## SOCIAL & PERSONAL

THE WEEKLY MEETING OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING JERUSALEM ROTARY CLUB will take place today at 1:00 p.m. at the YMCA, King David Street. H.E. Manuel Emilio Lopez Frago, the Costa Rican Ambassador, will address the club.

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**HENDRY CHAMPION**

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Shiva at Rehov Hamelachim 40/1 Netanya, until Wednesday, July 24, at 10:00 a.m.

## STRIKE

(Continued from Page 1) this is the first time the court recognized the Histadrut's right to hold a protest strike against the government.

Peretz warned yesterday that "the more the government assaults the workers with decrees and Draconian measures, the more the workers will fight back to defend themselves. We are now at a time in which all the norms and balances in the market are being altered, the government is making hasty decisions, and all the decrees are on the workers' backs."

"We are willing to be partners in the economic policy, but they

refused to negotiate with us on a responsible plan. We say to the government, don't make the workers the sole victims of all your cutbacks. Don't run the state on the backs of the workers alone," Peretz said.

Peretz scoffed at the gathering of economic leaders and politicians in luxurious surroundings in Caesarea, saying they are oblivious to the suffering their economic steps are causing.

"They should realize that neither the workers nor the investors - who are running away from the collapsing stock market - are impressed by their posture," Peretz noted.

Peretz dismissed the accusation that the strike is political, saying "people don't understand what a political strike means. They think mistakenly that it's to do with parties. The strike is aimed against the government, no matter what party it belongs to. The previous government did not conduct such an aggressive war against the workers. When MK Yossi Beilin [whose proposals Finance Minister Dan Meridor claims his economic program is based on] suggested similar measures to me before the elections, I rejected them and warned him they would not pass."

Evelyn Gordon adds: MK Avraham Herschson (Likud), chairman of the Likud-affiliated Histadrut Ovdim Leumit, yesterday called on union members not to join the strike, which he said is politically motivated.

He said Leumit also has concerns about the budget cuts, and he will meet with Meridor to discuss them.

"However, we should not participate in political strikes that destroy the economy," he said.

## PLAN

(Continued from Page 1) government bonds, to moderate the exceptional fluctuations in the bonds' prices. They said the bond purchases would be financed by selling non-index-linked Treasury bills.

The decision was made following an all-night meeting held by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel and Finance Minister Dan Meridor, which finished early yesterday morning.

To implement the plan, the government will initiate an amendment to the Treasury Bill Law, to raise the permitted upper limit for Treasury bill issues as required. This will enable the government to sell more Treasury bills. Treasury bills from this supplement will be sold solely for the purpose of buying the government bonds.

It was not clear yesterday when the government would start buying bonds. In February 1995, the government announced it would throw a similar safety net under the market but only had to intervene once.

(Continued from Page 1) Netanyahu's visit to Washington last week.

"We have long been concerned by the economic suffering of the Palestinian people on the West Bank and Gaza Strip," Burns said. "We hope that easing the closure will allow the Palestinians to get back on their feet."

"The Palestinians feel like they are being manipulated by Netanyahu," a Western diplomat said. "There is a single meeting with the Palestinians before a big event which appears designed to take the heat off Israel. Yet there is no substance, no follow-through on how issues will be addressed."

"To say there will some unspecified easing of the closure before you meet Mubarak looks like a public-relations exercise, unless there are specifics. If it is serious,

"The treatment of the capital market requires a widespread variety of measures," Frenkel told reporters last night.

"We've tried to prevent immediate damage, which I hope we've done. The treatment of the bourse will be long-term," added Meridor, after he addressed a special cabinet session on the capital market.

"The premise that when fiscal expansion is practiced a central bank should exercise monetary restraint does not necessarily mean that when a government exercises budgetary restraint, the central bank should necessarily ease interest rates," Frenkel said yesterday in Caesarea.

He added that although the government has cut its budget, the macroeconomic situation is still severe, and refused to make any commitment to reducing interest rates. He stressed, in an interview with Channel 1, that the government's main battle must be the fight against inflation.

## PLAN

Meridor said last night on Channel 1 that the government would not interfere with the bourse.

The feeling on the stock exchange is that the intervention plan will not prevent people from pulling money out of provident funds.

Even before the opening of the stock market yesterday, traders said the new measures would have little effect on the share market crisis and called for lower interest rates, a view shared by Manufacturers Association President Dan Propper.

Gad Haker, head of the international department at Betucha Securities and Investments, said the stock market opened yesterday with a surplus supply of shares, but the fall in prices was less dramatic than in the past few weeks.

"Shares are falling as a result of the fall in shares on Wall Street yesterday and because of the continuing crises in the local stock market. But the falls are less

intense than in the past week," he said.

Bond prices have also been falling, as provident funds faced with massive redemptions have been forced to sell bonds and stocks. The falling bond prices have pushed up yields to 10-year highs.

Treasury officials said that to counter the inflationary effects of buying bonds, the Bank of Israel will re-absorb money put into the economy by selling short-term bonds.

Koor CEO Benny Gaon called on Netanyahu to meet immediately with Yasser Arafat. Gaon, in a lecture delivered at the Fourth Caesarea Conference, where Israel's leading economic and business figures meet annually, said that a failure on the part of the government to quickly restore the peace process would ultimately generate an economically counterproductive sense of uncertainty.

Amotz Asa-El contributed to this report.

Stock market report, Page 9

## JORDANIAN

Meanwhile, a meeting of donor countries convened in Gaza yesterday to discuss Palestinian finances. Two mid-level Israeli representatives participated in the meeting. They said they were not authorized to discuss easing the closure or any Palestinian initiatives, sources say.

Furthermore, officials in

it will be welcomed by all. So far, the whole government's approach looks to the Palestinians like flim-flam."

It is precisely because of this concern over being manipulated that PA President Yasser Arafat rebuffed a meeting with Gold on Monday, sources insisted.

Sources also said that during the last meeting between Gold and Abbas a few weeks ago Abbas responded to Israel's call for "reciprocity" by offering to hold talks in which each side would put forward its own view on the other's violations of the peace accord. However, no such encounter has been held. Moreover, there has been no meeting to discuss alleged Palestinian violations in Jerusalem.

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## Ugandan army hunts for vanished refugees, rebels

KAMPALA, Uganda (Reuters) — The Ugandan army scoured the bushes for Sudanese refugees who vanished after an attack by Christian fundamentalist rebels over the weekend in which more than 100 were killed, a government minister said yesterday.

UN aid agencies said some 2,000 Sudanese refugees were missing from Acholi Pii camp in northern Uganda after gunmen believed to be from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) raided it and killed 107 people.

"We have sent out troops in the area and they are now searching the bushes for the disappeared refugees," Amama Mbatia, Minister of State for Defense told Reuters in Kampala.

The search had already yielded results, with some of the refugees found in Gulu, south of the raided camp, Mbatia said.

"We are also pursuing the rebels. Even those they abducted we should be able to rescue."

Acholi Pii was home to 16,000 refugees, part of the 210,000 Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda who fled the civil war between southern rebels and the Islamic-backed government.

The Ugandan rebels attacked it days after some 600 of their fighters returned from their camps in Sudan. Their deadliest attacks since they started fighting President Yoweri Museveni's government in 1987 have been launched on return from Sudan.

The LRA, which says it wants to rule along the Bible's Ten Commandments, denied it had anything to do with the attack, in which refugees were shot at point blank and many more were killed with machetes.

# Gore: Yeltsin looked good

LYNN BERRY  
MOSCOW

US Vice President Al Gore proclaimed Boris Yeltsin in "good health" after a 45-minute talk yesterday in a health resort outside Moscow, seeming unfazed that he was kept waiting an extra day.

"He looked very good to me," said Gore, the first Western leader to meet Yeltsin since the latest round of speculation about his health flared up.

Their talk came a day after the 65-year-old Yeltsin abruptly canceled a meeting with Gore, further fueling rumors about his fragile condition.

Yeltsin looked stiff, as he often does, but was alert and pacing the room while waiting for Gore at the government health resort where he is taking a two-week vacation.

In his first appearance before the foreign media since last month, Yeltsin greeted Gore with a big smile. He joked with his visitor and talked with animation.

"He seemed to be in good health, relaxed, smiling and seemed very actively engaged in the subjects we discussed during our conversation," Gore told reporters afterward.

Gore said he didn't raise Yeltsin's sudden cancellation of their meeting a day earlier.

"Of course I didn't comment on that," he said. "It's not at all unusual to have meetings postponed from one day to the next."

But the swift change of plans, just minutes before Gore was to leave for the meeting, set off a worldwide wave of speculation about Yeltsin's condition.

It was just the latest in a string of no-shows that began near the end of Yeltsin's vigorous campaign for a second term. Since then, Yeltsin has been seen only in official TV footage and carefully scripted Kremlin events.

Yeltsin has had two bouts of serious heart trouble in the last year, suffers from a bad back, and is prone — by his own description — to bouts of drinking and black depression.

Aides say Yeltsin is "very tired" from the campaign, not sick.

The Clinton administration was a strong supporter of Yeltsin's re-



Russian President Boris Yeltsin greets US Vice President Al Gore, who is in Moscow to co-chair a bilateral commission that will handle trade and economic relations between the countries. (Reuters)

## Angry Chechens protest killing of 13, demand investigation

MOSCOW (AP) — Outraged Chechens, shouting and crying, blocked a road into their capital Grozny yesterday to protest the killing of 13 people they said were slain by Russian troops.

Both the Russian government and separatist rebels accused the other of committing the atrocity. But the pro-Moscow Chechen government also angrily blamed Russians after talking to eyewitnesses — a reaction that appeared to lend credence to claims that federal troops were responsible.

Chechnya's Vice Prime Minister Abdullah Bugayev quoted witnesses as saying the victims were gunned down by Russian armored personnel carriers Monday night in the outskirts of Grozny.

Bodies still lay at the roadside covered with bloody cloth yesterday and nearby cars were charred as a crowd of Chechens blocked the road where the massacre took place. Some shouted in rage and women wept over the bodies.

Bugayev told the Interfax news agency that 11 of the bodies were burned and two were disfigured by stab wounds.

Circumstances behind the killings remained unclear.

The Russian military command, in a statement relayed through the Moscow-installed Chechen government, initially said troops opened fire in response to a rebel attack on a military outpost.

Later yesterday, the Russians issued a statement denying involvement altogether. The military command claimed rebels had killed 13 civilians in "a flagrant provocation... to destabilize the situation in the republic," Interfax reported.

Chechen government officials described Russian gunmen going on a rampage in two APCs, shooting at three vehicles, stabbing survivors to death, soaking their bodies in gasoline and then setting them on fire.

Government spokesman Ruslan Martagov blamed the "party of war" — hawkish Russian leaders — for the killings, and said they were meant to reignite the war and undermine peace efforts, Interfax reported.

The killings in Grozny came in the midst of a Russian offensive against the rebels in southeastern Chechnya, in which dozens of civilians have died.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**Bomb hits Ukrainian prime minister's car**  
KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko narrowly escaped an assassination attempt yesterday when a bomb exploded in his motorcade, throwing a shadow on the country's newly formed government.

Lazarenko was treated for a slight neck injury and immediately released, police said. No major injuries were reported.

The blast, the first such high-level attack on a Ukrainian leader in modern history, generated political shock waves. It prompted a string of emergency closed-door meetings and heightened security around government buildings and embassies.

No one immediately claimed responsibility. But Ukrainian media and officials suggested it was tied to Lazarenko's powerful interests in Ukraine's gas and alcohol industries, and in many leading Ukrainian banks.

**US official denies Saudis have escape car**  
WASHINGTON (Reuters) — Amid signs of concern over Saudi Arabian cooperation, US defense officials denied on Monday that Saudi investigators had found the getaway car used in a bombing that killed 19 US servicemen near Dhahran.

"The car that was found is apparently not the vehicle involved in the June 25 incident," said one of the officials in response to questions about a *Washington Post* report that the Saudis believed they had found the car north of Dhahran.

The officials, who asked not to be identified, spoke with Reuters as concern appeared to grow in Washington over whether the Saudis were fully cooperating on the truck bomb that hit a housing complex used by US Air Force personnel.

**Jewish cemetery desecrated in Russia**  
MOSCOW (AP) — Vandals desecrated several tombs at a Jewish cemetery in the central Russian town of Tambov, painting swastikas on the monuments, a news report said yesterday.

A number of Jewish tombstones were overturned and a slogan painted on one declared that "The Nazis are alive," the ITAR-Tass news agency said.

Tambov is a major Communist Party stronghold in Russia's "red belt" where the city council defiantly flies the Soviet flag. It is about 420 kilometers southeast of Moscow in a conservative farming region.

A regional lawmaker and Jewish community activist, Yakov Farber, told ITAR-Tass this was city's fourth desecration of Jewish tombs in recent years, and said he suspected a neo-fascist group.

Security officials denied any such groups existed in the city, ITAR-Tass said.

**Summation in trial of ex-Nazi Priebke**  
ROME (Reuters) — A lawyer representing Italian Jews said yesterday that former SS captain Erich Priebke was "demonic... and merciless," and urged a military court to sentence the 82-year-old German war-crimes defendant to life in prison.

Priebke, extradited from Argentina last November, is accused of complicity in the massacre of 335 men and boys at the Ardeatine Caves outside Rome in March 1944, the worst World War II atrocity in Italy.

Oreste Bisazza Terracini was the first of several civil plaintiff lawyers to give summations at Priebke's trial before a three-judge court. The trial, which began on May 8, faced a delay in its final phase over allegations that the bench was biased in Priebke's favor.

A military appeals court yesterday put off until July 29 consideration of a request by the civil plaintiffs to dismiss the judges and order a new trial.

The appeals court last week rejected a similar request by the prosecution, which sought dismissal of the bench because of a conversation presiding judge Agostino Quistelli had with a general predicting Priebke would be cleared.

## Clinton leaves options open on Cuba sanctions

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton opened the way yesterday for legal action against foreign firms doing business in Cuba but imposed a six-month moratorium on lawsuits. He could extend the moratorium again in six months.

In a matter of considerable political and diplomatic significance, Clinton decided that Americans who lost property in Cuba at the time of the revolution may sue in US courts foreign firms now utilizing those assets.

But in an apparent attempt to defuse the controversy as an election issue, Clinton held that no lawsuits may be filed before February 1.

Officials pointed out that the issue will be back on Clinton's desk again in mid-January because of the six-month clause, meaning that he reserves the right at that time to render meaningless the February 1 deadline.

Clinton said in a statement that as a result of his decision, "all companies doing business in Cuba are hereby on notice that by trafficking in expropriated property, they face the prospects of lawsuits and significant liability in the United States."

He added that during the six-month suspension period, his administration will work to promote democracy in Cuba.

The legislation has triggered an angry response from American allies, who have been insisting that Clinton exercise his waiver authority on grounds that the United States should not have American jurisdiction beyond US shores.

Clinton also has faced pressure from Cuban-Americans and conservatives in general to open the way for legal action against the more than 100 foreign firms which have been operating on property taken from Americans more than 35 years ago.

Clinton said the allies must understand that for countries and foreign companies that take advantage of expropriated property, the choice is clear: "They can join our efforts to cease profiting from such property. They can join our efforts to promote a transition to democracy in Cuba. Or they can face the full implementation" of the law.

## Princess Di, no longer royal, resigns from 100 charities

LONDON (AP) — Princess Diana is giving up patronage of marriage counseling and the elderly, but sticking with AIDS, the ballet, the homeless and a cancer hospital.

Diana's mass resignation yesterday from nearly 100 charities left them free to find a real royal patron after her divorce from Prince Charles. It upset the abandoned and delighted the half dozen she's keeping.

It also raised new questions about how a 35-year-old, multimillionaire divorcee will occupy herself.

Diana resigned a day after the first court stage of the divorce that will strip her of the prefix Her Royal Highness. Her spokeswoman, Jane Atkinson, said the princess has quit all but six charities because of the "change in her status."

Under the agreement to end the 15-year marriage, Charles will pay Diana a settlement that has been reported at £17 million (\$26.35 million) and £400,000 (\$620,000) a year to run a private office.

Shortly before Monday's divorce hearing, she resigned as colonel-

in-chief of five army regiments.

With her sons at boarding schools, most charity duties gone, her hopes of becoming roving goodwill ambassador apparently quashed, and only rare invitations to future royal events, Diana could face some long days in her Kensington Palace residence.

"I don't understand what has changed in her circumstances that she cannot give the commitment [to charities] in the future," the British Broadcast Corp.'s royal correspondent, Jenny Bond, commented. "The implication would seem to be she feels, perhaps, she's not worthy of them."

John Mayo, director of Help The Aged, a British-based international charity whose income has quadrupled since Diana became patron 11 years ago, recalled accompanying Diana, then aged 25, on her first official visit to an old age home.

"She sat down on the floor. She took the hand of an old person in each hand and she said, 'My name's Diana. What's yours?'" said Mayo. "It's that ability to get

through to people and to give them hope which is so important."

He added, "Perhaps she will come back one day."

Relate, Britain's main marriage guidance counseling body, said it would keep the princess informed of its work.

Other charities Diana has quit include the British Red Cross, the International Spinal Research Trust and the Garden Festival of Wales.

She is left with just the English National Ballet; a leprosy mission connected to Mother Teresa; AIDS; a homeless charity; and two London hospitals, the Royal Marsden for cancer patients and Great Ormond Street for children.

"We are delighted and we feel privileged," said Derek Bodeil, director of the National AIDS Trust. "We believe she has done more than almost anyone else to combat the stigma and misconceptions that still surround HIV/AIDS."

Earlier, the Duchess of York, also no longer HRH since her divorce in May from Charles' brother, Prince Andrew, was quoted as saying she and Diana are off soon on a post-divorce vacation.

They will take along Diana's sons, Prince William, 14, and Prince Harry, 11, and the duchess daughters, Princess Beatrice, 7, and Princess Eugenie, 6.

"We planned it together," the former Sarah Ferguson was quoted as telling the *Daily Express*. "We thought it would be nice... All cousins together."

## Indian authorities blamed for stampede at holy shrines

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Local authorities came under attack yesterday for their inability to cope with thousands of Hindu worshippers who stampeded at two Hindu shrines, killing at least 58 people.

Angry legislators demanded in Parliament that a judge should probe Monday's disaster and the officials found guilty be punished.

Raghavji, who uses one name, of the Bharatiya Janata Party, said that thousands of pilgrims had to wait for 1½ hours for a local government official to offer prayer at the Ujjain temple. And that started the scramble.

Urmilaben Patel of Congress Party said there was no coordination between the temple management and the district administration at the two shrines.

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# Algerians struggle through strife

LAMINE GHANMI  
ALGIERS

SHOPS in the run-down capital of Algeria, their bare shelves for so long a symbol of the violence and economic strife shaking this North African country, now show new signs of wealth.

But on the streets outside, children beg - a new sight too in Algeria where a former egalitarian nationalist system offered most people basic salaries and an adequate meal.

The killings in the conflict between Moslem fundamentalists and government security forces, which brought road blocks and identity checks to slow the heartbeat of the city, appear now to take second place in the concerns of ordinary Algerians.

Tight censorship has done nothing to jam "radio trottoir" - the "pavement radio" of rumor and fact that keeps Algerians better informed than their government would often like.

"Five men were killed this morning near al-Katar hospital in Algiers," a bearded young man told his boss at an airline office as he checked the computer to find a seat for a former general stranded by the strike of the state airline Air Algérie.

"How were they killed?" she asked after glancing around. "They had their throats cut," he replied.

Farid, the youngest employee, added: "Yesterday, eight people were gunned down at a fake road-block in Algiers."

But many Algerians appear to agree with the government view of a relative improvement of the security throughout Algeria. They see its pledge to fix the economy, however, as mere lip service for most people.

While new cars jostle for space with ancient buses crammed with ordinary Algerians struggling to get to work, women pick through fruit and vegetables at prices which leave their baskets half empty. Inside city bread shops, the residence of this nation of 28 million people is tested and an air of gloom is evident.

Prices of even basic goods have skyrocketed since the authorities, spurred by creditor countries who bailed them out with rescheduling much of \$31 billion in foreign debt, moved to end subsidies and introduce a market economy.

Economic reality - opportunities for some, a battle for survival for others - dominates daily life in this overcrowded capital of four million people.

"Two years ago, the terror was 10-sided but now the situation is moving towards settling," said Hassan Imazighi, a young man

riding the wave of get-rich-quick opportunities.

"The worst was not the fire which seemed to engulf all the country especially in 1994 and early 1995 but the feeling that everything was in a state of panic and chaos," said his wife Farida, working with him in their new private communications business.

An estimated 50,000 people have been killed in the conflict which erupted after the authorities, in January 1992, canceled a general election which Islamists were poised to win.

But as a sign perhaps of a more relaxed atmosphere, a taxi driver, engrossed in debate with this reporter and an Algerian sharing the vehicle, shot straight through one road block enforced by Republican guard paramilitary in eastern Algiers.

This reporter got a real fright. Soldiers on road blocks have killed several people for similar errors, opening up with Kalashnikovs that leave little time to apologize. The driver reversed, the apologies were accepted.

At the city's press center, home of several big newspapers, a woman journalist phoned home to say she would be late because staff had been "told that a hit-squad was lurking for a high-publicity target."

"It is a great deal of progress, as they can now tell us in advance about possible attempts by terrorists," she said.

Over 50 journalists, whose work was severely censored, have been killed during the conflict, branded by fundamentalist groups as supporters of the government. Many more have fled abroad.

"The press center was in the past three years a mourning place as slain colleagues' coffins were brought before burial. The same place will be a rallying point for life and freedom," said one journalist, referring to a strike planned for next week to protest at the authorities' shutting down of the French-language newspaper *La Tribune*.

And earlier this month, more than 100,000 Algerians, most of them young men and girls, swarmed Algiers's main leisure complex of Riad el-Feth to dance and sing to Rai music until the early hours of Algeria's Independence Day.

Two years ago in the western city of Oran, Moslem guerrillas shot dead Cheb Hossni, a leading Rai singer. Others went abroad.

"Despite the thousands of dead, the young are trying to take up pleasure and joy again ... overcoming our fears of the violence," said a young girl who traveled from Oran to attend. (Reuters)

# Lebanon's Christians face painful choice

ANALYSIS  
ANDREW TARNOWSKI

LEBANON'S Christians, relieved by the acquittal of a Christian warlord for the bombing of a church in which 11 people died, face an agonizing decision: Should they boycott next month's parliamentary polls because of an election law that discriminates against them?

Anti-Syrian Christian opposition leaders have called on people to repeat the boycott of the 1992 elections, denouncing the law as illegal and the voting as "the most dangerous forgery aimed at erasing the Lebanese homeland."

The 1992 boycott was a massive protest by most Christians and many Moslems against the presence of 35,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, Damascus's influence over the government and the perceived unfairness of election arrangements.

But the result of the boycott was a pro-Syrian parliament and there has been a growing realization on the part of the Christian opposition that the boycott simply excluded them from national affairs.

The decision by Christian voters whether or not to take part in the polls will show their willingness to accept that their community's position was subordinated by the 1975-90 civil war and that the Syrians now play the dominant role in the country.

The acquittal last week of Samir Geagea, who could have been sentenced to death if found guilty for the 1994 church bombing, relieved fears by the Christian minority that he might become the only civil-war militia leader to be executed. But newspapers pointed out that he still remains the only sectarian chief to face trial, while pro-Syrian chiefs said to have dirtied their hands in the war hold high office.

The court convicted four members of Geagea's militia for involvement in the bombing, which it said was ordered and planned by the Israelis.

Geagea is serving two life sentences for murder and the opposition political party he formed after the war from his Lebanese Forces militia was outlawed following the church bombing.

A Beirut newspaper said the election law imposed on Christian voters the same kind of political discrimination that Geagea has experienced.

"Christian candidates are practically at the mercy of Moslem voters, with the contrary never being true," the French-language Beirut daily *L'Orient-Le Jour* said.

Christian opposition leaders in exile - ex-president Amin Gemayel and former army commander Gen. Michel Aoun - joined right-wing National Liberal Party leader Dori Chamoun in issuing the boycott call a

day after the election law was passed. The law, approved last week by parliament, is tailor-made to ensure the election of Druse leader Walid Jumblat, an ally of the Syrian-backed government, at the expense of the Christians.

Voters were torn between the temptation of repeating the 1992 boycott, which did not bring the desired results, and taking part in a vote with only "hypothetical advantages," *L'Orient-Le Jour* said.

Mount Lebanon, home to the Druse and the only region where Christians have an overwhelming majority, is the only one of Lebanon's five governorates that the law divides into smaller constituencies, creating districts with Druse majorities that can elect Jumblat.

The law has been widely denounced as unconstitutional and contrary to the Taif accord of 1989, which set out the political settlement which ended the civil war and ruled that all constituencies should be based on governorates. (Reuters)



Brunei Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah receives his subjects during the investiture ceremony in conjunction with his birthday at the state palace in Bandar Seri Bagawan on Monday. The sultan, the world's richest man, celebrated his 50th birthday with Prince Charles and Michael Jackson among his guests. (Reuters)

# Egyptian police kill terrorist leader

EGYPTIAN police said they shot dead a wanted militant Islamist leader this week on the platform of a railway station in southern Egypt.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that Sayyed Abderrahman Mustafa, 28, was standing alone on the platform in Abu Tig waiting to meet someone when the police ambushed him. It said Mustafa shot back but there were no police casualties.

The statement described Mustafa as the head of the military wing of the militant Gama'a al-Islamiya (Islamic Group) in the southern province of Assiut. He was allegedly in charge of the military training of Gama'a members and had taken part in 20 attacks, in which 35 civilians and policemen were killed.

Police suspect Mustafa took part in an attack on a farm in nearby Badari in February this year, killing eight Christians. Mustafa, once a trainee teacher, comes from the Badari area.

Police meanwhile seized copies and a printer's proof of a book on the prophets of Islam called blasphemous by Moslem clerics.

Three thousands copies of *A Psychoanalysis of the Prophets* had been sold before Al-Azhar, a university and religious complex that is a major seat of Islamic learning, deemed it disrespectful to religious figures.

Government officials have maintained Al-Azhar cannot ban books and can only recommend. But its recommendations are usually followed, especially concerning books with religious themes.

The book was seized for giving incorrect descriptions of the characters of religious prophets, said a police source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The author, Abdullah Kamal, was summoned for questioning. Kamal, a journalist for the liberal magazine *Rose el-Youssef*, said it would now be up to the courts to judge if the book should be banned.

He defended his work as "academic research based on other books found on the market, which are not banned" and are about the prophets' lives. Islam considers earlier prophets - from Abraham to Moses and Jesus - to be among the faith's prophets, along with Mohammed. (Reuters)

# Bahrain, Qatar take dispute to Saudis

BAHRAIN'S crown prince said his country was prepared to fight to the death to defend territory that is also claimed by neighboring Qatar.

The Hawar islands are part of Bahrain and "we will not allow this fact to be lost under the cover of border claims and disputes," said Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

"We are ready at any time to prove it with facts, defend it and die for its sake," he said during a meeting of high-ranking defense officials, the official Gulf News Agency reported.

Sheikh Hamad termed the Qatar claims on the islands "expansionism ... which does not have any limit."

The crown prince's comments came as the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, was in Saudi Arabia to discuss the dispute.

Saudi Arabia neighbors both countries and has been seeking to act as a mediator in the dispute.

Qatar took the case to the International Court of Justice in 1991 after an earlier round of Saudi mediation failed. But Bahrain has rejected the court's jurisdiction.

Besides the Hawar islands, the dispute is also over territorial water boundaries and the Zubara land strip in Qatar, where the Bahraini people's ancestors lived 200 years ago.

Relations between Bahrain and Qatar have been strained since 1986 when a Qatari helicopter seized 29 workers of a Dutch company sent by Bahrain to the disputed Fasht al-Dibal reef to build a Bahraini coast guard station there.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain are partners in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, a political and economic alliance whose other members are Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani was reported to have been joined in the Red Sea port city of Jiddah by Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Saudi Arabia, the dominant power in the GCC, has its own border dispute with Qatar. Its oil-rich Eastern Province is linked to the island nation of Bahrain by a causeway. (AP)

# Saudis hinder US military moves

A sharp split between the US and Saudi Arabia has emerged, with a top Saudi prince saying he opposes moving American soldiers to new housing which the Pentagon says would be less vulnerable to terrorists.

The comments by Defense Minister Prince Sultan came during a visit to Saudi Arabia by FBI director Louis J. Freeh, who continued to press Saudi officials to grant his agents access to all evidence gathered on the bombing of a US military housing complex in Dhahran last month.

In the latest report on evidence, official sources said this week they have found the getaway car used by the terrorists, who killed 19 US servicemen and injured hundreds of people in the June 25 attack. They said the white Chevrolet Caprice Classic was found in Dammam, 10km. from Dhahran, a few days after the bombing.

There was no explanation as to why authorities did not disclose the discovery of the car until now.

FBI agents investigating the truck-bomb attack have been restricted to interviewing US airmen and sifting debris at the US military complex, a US law enforcement official complained.

Freeh continued to press Saudi officials at the highest levels to grant his agents access to all evidence gathered on the bombing.

Freeh's mission to resolve US-Saudi differences came as a US law enforcement official, requesting anonymity, explained some of the restrictions put on the more than 70 FBI agents sent to the Arab kingdom.

"We haven't been allowed to talk to people in the community. We've been restricted to the US post and interviewing the US airmen," one US law enforcement official said. "They basically all say they were asleep, heard the explosion and saw no one."

The US agents want to conduct a full investigation, including talking with Saudi witnesses and anyone detained by the Saudis for questioning in the attack, the official said.

FBI agents in Dhahran's Khobar Towers complex, home to 3,713 US servicemen, have analyzed rubble, debris from the truck and the bomb itself, but they have been hampered by a lack of forensic equipment on site.

The FBI teams left so swiftly for Saudi Arabia after the blast they could not bring much equipment with them and have had to borrow analytical instruments from the US Air Force, the official said.

Meanwhile, a US Embassy source in Riyadh said Americans living in the kingdom have received more phone calls threatening attacks from people speaking Arabic or broken English.

A recorded embassy hotline message warned US citizens living in the kingdom: "Individual Americans and companies in Saudi Arabia have been receiving phone calls threatening further attacks."

Last week, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said it was virtually certain that some of the 1,500 US troops based in Riyadh will be moved to Saudi bases more easily defended against terrorists.

# Italian judge puts off terrorist hearing

A judge in Rome this week postponed a hearing to decide whether two Algerians and an Iranian should stand trial for the murder of an Iranian opposition figure in the Italian capital in 1993.

Judge Alberto Macchia said he was putting off the hearing until September 25 because one of the suspects had not been officially notified of the session.

Mohammad Hussein Naghdi was killed by automatic weapon shots fired by assailants riding on a motorbike as he was being driven to his office in Rome, where he served as representative in Italy of the National Council of the Iranian Resistance, which is part of the leading Iranian opposition group, the Mujahedeen Khalq.

The group blamed Iran's government for the killing; Tehran blamed the killing on disputes between opposition groups.

The Iranian Embassy in Rome "categorically denies any involvement by an Iranian diplomat" in the slaying, a statement said.

According to court records, the three defendants are Adda Khatem and Salah Pidgelet, both Algerian; and Alireza Iazdi Neyad, an Iranian. Italian newspapers say the three are living in Italy but are not in custody.

Lawyers for the victim's relatives, including his widow, Fermina Moroni, an Italian, said they would urge the Italian foreign ministry to pressure Iranian authorities in hopes of bringing to justice a fourth person considered a suspect according to Italian press reports - an Iranian whose diplomatic immunity would keep him from being prosecuted. (AP)

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## A pillar of peace

IN his speech before the United States Congress last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called reciprocity one of the three "pillars of peace." This particular pillar has been received with some trepidation by the US administration — concerned that Netanyahu will use the Palestinian Authority's failure to honor signed agreements as a means to halt the peace process — and largely derided by the opposition here, who, while in power, let the Palestinians break their commitments with impunity.

It is difficult to understand the opposition to the prime minister's demand that reciprocity be taken seriously. Just because Israel is the strongest political and economic power in the Middle East, as former foreign minister Ehud Barak argued in *The Jerusalem Post* on Monday, does not mean it should allow its Arab partners to renege on signed agreements. Agreements are reciprocal by definition; reciprocity should be a given, not a controversial demand.

Netanyahu's opponents say that they are not opposed to the principle of reciprocity, only to it being used as an excuse to halt the peace process. Instead of complaining, these critics should realize that the concept of reciprocity could be a force that binds the prime minister to the peace process in two important respects.

First, all the Palestinian Authority must do to force the new prime minister to comply with the Oslo accords — agreements he roundly attacked during the election campaign — is to abide by them more fully themselves. The sure-fire way for Oslo proponents to propel the Netanyahu government down their road is to encourage Palestinian compliance.

Second, reciprocity is a two-way street. It is time to take inventory of aspects of the accords that Israel has been slow to implement.

While Israel's failure to redeploy in Hebron is the most significant example of non-compliance — and the government cannot claim for much longer that it is studying the issue before making a decision — there are also the matters of opening Israeli agricultural markets to Palestinian goods, and "safe passage" between Gaza and the other cities under PA control.

Removing agricultural trade barriers would be a good place for Israel to show that it takes reciprocity seriously. There is no security issue here, and it dovetails nicely with Netanyahu's free-market thrust. Indeed, there is a strong suspicion that the blocking of

Palestinian agricultural goods is more economic protectionism, pushed for by Israeli farmers, than anything else.

During the height of the closure, for example, special dispensations were granted to import Gaza-produced textile products, because Israel's industrialists needed them, while Gazan fruit and vegetables were banned. Liberalizing agricultural trade — while maintaining quality standards — would benefit both the Israeli consumer and the Palestinian economy.

The essence of Oslo's interim phase was Israeli withdrawal from the cities in the territories in exchange for the Palestinians ceasing acts of terror and becoming partners in combating terrorism. Israel, having withdrawn from the Gaza Strip and six of the seven cities in the territories, has complied with the lion's share of its side of the bargain.

The PA, though not engaging in terrorism itself, is still far from upholding provisions critical to the curbing of terrorism by others, such as the confiscation of arms and disarming of militias. The PLO Covenant has not been amended to recognize Israel's right to exist. Provisions providing for the extradition of captured terrorists have been openly flaunted. And PA offices and police continue to operate in Jerusalem.

Under the previous government, there was a tacit agreement that neither side would put its foot down regarding the non-compliance of the other. While there is a certain pragmatism to this approach, it has gotten out of hand. It is time for both sides to improve their compliance with the interim agreement before moving forward.

While the PA has considerably further to go, Israel's new government should lead the way by liberalizing trade with the Palestinians immediately and announcing its intention to abide by other provisions of the agreement that the previous government did not. Such moves, coupled with yesterday's announcement that the closure on the territories will be eased — a move which is necessary to both easing the Palestinians' economic plight and reducing the pressure and frustration which inevitably builds up during such a long period of mass unemployment in the territories — could smooth the prime minister's visit to Egypt tomorrow.

Netanyahu should use this visit to show Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that Israel intends to meet its obligations, thus putting the ball squarely in the Palestinians' court. The concept of reciprocity, he can tell his host, will be employed to move the peace process forward, not stall it.

## Unnecessary strike

TODAY'S strike, called by the Histadrut, is more than pointless. It is a startling reminder of the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of Israel's labor movement. Of the estimated 400,000 workers expected to obey the call to stay home from work — or if not stay home, enjoy a day at the beach or a barbecue in a public park — few, if any, have any real idea as to the strike's purpose.

This is not surprising, because there is no real reason behind the walkout, except for the fact that it is a Likud government, and not Labor, that is trying to clear up the economic mess left behind by the previous government. As the stock market slump shows all too clearly, the economy needs more than an aspirin if it is to recover from the fiscal irresponsibility of the past four years.

The budget cuts decided on by the government were not drawn out of thin air. Some were part of the "100 days plan" prepared by a team of Shimon Peres's advisers, who were given a brief to prepare the next Labor government's policy guidelines. Like the present incumbents of the Prime Minister's Office and the Treasury, Peres's aides proposed cutting child benefits and school hours; they even suggested raising the mandatory retire-

ment age from 65 to 70.

But Labor lost the election; instead it is the Likud which is introducing these vital, budget-cutting measures. If these measures are so dangerous to the working public, it is Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz's duty to offer sensible alternatives. But all we have heard from him is the tired old rhetoric one thought had died out with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The call to "tax the rich" by placing a payroll tax on employers and eliminating the government's annual NIS 8 billion payment to the National Insurance Institute only highlights the Histadrut's lack of understanding as to how a modern economy works. Payroll taxes, although they sound good on the barricades, make hiring workers more expensive. Employers, if faced with such a levy, will look to make staff reductions, and it is the blue-collar workers, and not the rich, who will be suddenly out of a job.

Today's strike will not achieve its aim, for the government cannot afford to deviate from its economic plan. Instead, hundreds of thousands of citizens, including the elderly and infirm, will be severely inconvenienced, as the Histadrut scores what it sees as political points but in reality is just another nail in the labor federation's coffin.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### LUNATIC DRIVERS

Sir, — May I suggest a method of controlling the lunatic drivers that plague our roads and whom the police apparently have difficulty catching.

Motorists may have noticed that a car being driven recklessly often continues in this manner until it is out of sight. This means you are not the only witness to the bad driving which, no doubt, happens every time a particular driver is at the wheel of his car. It is certain that dozens of other drivers have noticed it.

I suggest that at licensing time, every driver be issued a number of forms on which he can make an adequate report of any act of dangerous driving. The authorities cannot act on the strength of just one report, but if a number of reports come in from different — independent — people, complaining about the same car, the person habitually driving that car can be traced and appropriately dealt with.

N.M. RASBASH  
Ramat Efal

### TENDENTIOUS REPORTING

Sir, — At best, your report "Several Knesset committee heads face legal charges" (*J.P.*, July 4) demonstrates spectacular lack of judgment. Having noted the uproar about the appointment of Raphael Pihasi of Shas as chair of the Knesset House Committee, it continues, "But almost nothing was heard about the appointment of Sallah Tarif (Labor) as chairman of the Interior Committee, although he faces charges of illegal hunting and hunting without a license."

Some comparison! Consider the facts which were included in the article. Pihasi is prepared to chair the committee which will be asked to lift his immunity so that he can stand trial for fraud. By contrast, Tarif has asked that his immunity be lifted so that he can face charges for infractions of the hunting law. Need any more be said?

M.C.J. ELTON  
Jerusalem.

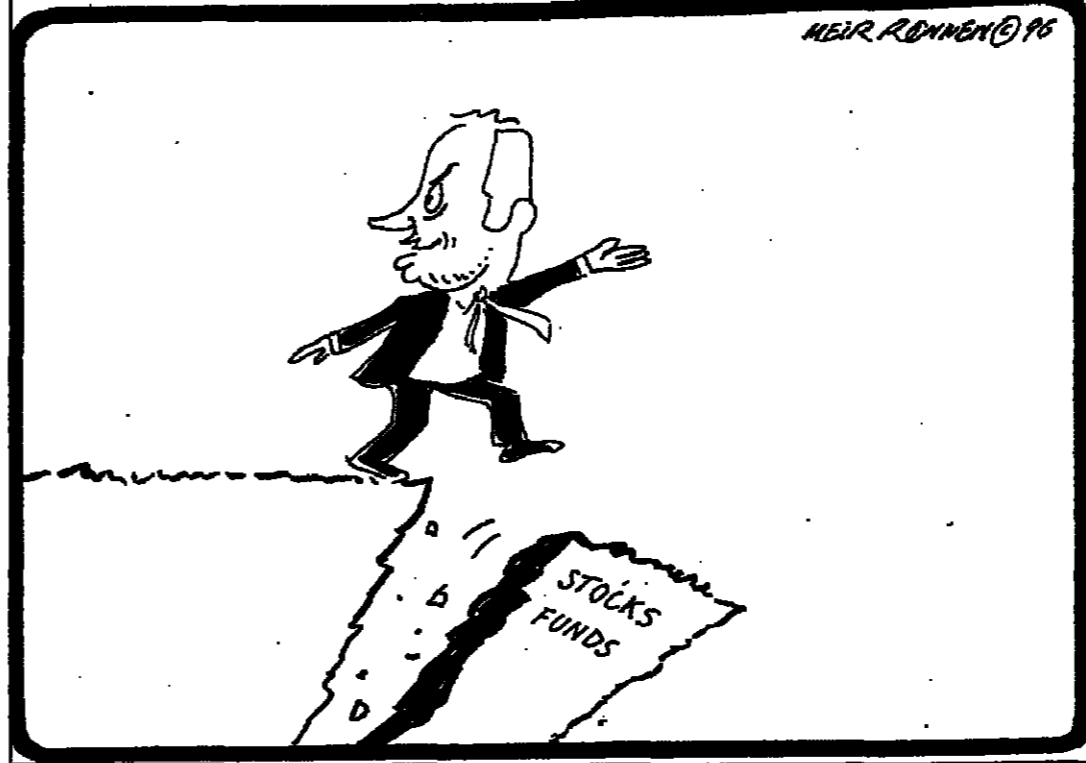
### STATUS QUO

Sir, — Let's get the facts straight. For thousands of years the laws of marriage, divorce and conversion according to Torah tradition were accepted by the observant and secular Jew alike. About 200 years ago a division among Jews set in. The Reform Movement began in Hungary and Germany, followed by the Conservative Movement 100 years later. It was they who split traditional Judaism — and mass assimilation was the result.

Prime minister David Ben-Gurion, founder of modern Israel, did not want a split in the ranks of Judaism. He agreed that the Orthodox should control marriage, divorce and conversion.

It is the Reform and Conservative movements that are now nibbling away at these laws, and the Orthodox who are trying to maintain the status quo that has been accepted since the founding of the state.  
SHMUEL GOLDSTEIN  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

'We have to look two years ahead!'



## Let's meet halfway

THE PRIME minister's insistence on Arab democratization as a condition for peace was a cheap, unrealistic shot aimed at naive American sensibilities.

But that bit about reciprocity serving as the basis for a healthy and realistic peace? That was right on.

And reciprocity is the key to resolving another conflict — between secular and religious in Israel.

Unfortunately, the haredi demand to close off Rehov Bar-Ilan in Jerusalem on Shabbat was made in anything but a spirit of reciprocity. And the attempt by National Religious Party Minister of Transportation Yitzhak Levy to impose a so-called compromise — closing off the street "only" during Shabbat prayer times — is disingenuous, even cynical.

Prayer hours change with the calendar, and drivers would be driven crazy keeping track of those shifting hours.

What's more, the haredim themselves make no bones about the fact that any such "compromise" would act as the thin end of the wedge, the aim being total de facto closure of the street after a few weeks.

A little historical perspective is in order.

Before the Six Day War Bar-Ilan led only to the border with Jordanian-occupied eastern Jerusalem. Then the street was turned into a major arterial thoroughfare — as a concession for closing off Strauss and Yehzekel streets to Shabbat traffic in response to haredi demands.

Promises were made back then: There would be no further demands to close off Rehov Bar-Ilan to traffic.

Some years ago, stone-

YOSEF GOELL

throwing haredi goons attempted to close down the nearby road to Ramot — which they are now touting as the reasonable alternative to a closed Bar-Ilan.

And haredi leaders are demanding the closure of the major Sderot Weizman highway that connects French Hill to Ramot and skirts the new haredi neighborhood of Shuafat Ridge.

They are also threatening to close down the western entrance to the city into which more and more haredim have been mov-

When opposing stands seem irreconcilable why not try a little reciprocity?

ing. And haredim in Bnei Brak are demanding the closure of streets neighboring on a secular community.

THESE SALAMI tactics, taking on every appearance of a full-fledged war, fueled by the recent electoral successes of the haredi parties.

Can such a war be avoided? Only by reciprocity — that is to say, the recognition by different parts of the population that conflicting interests exist, and a readiness to reach viable compromises that could be painful.

Thus far the haredim have preferred the path of imposing their will by force when they think they have the political clout to succeed.

Secular consideration for haredi sensibilities in Bar-Ilan is certainly desirable — but only if consideration is mutual.

Let me assure the haredim that to very many Jerusalemites and other Israelis — including "traditional" Jews who attend synagogue but travel on Shabbat — the lack of Shabbat bus transport is at least as great an inconvenience and affront as Shabbat traffic in haredi neighborhoods is to the haredim.

The apparent haredi choice of exploiting political advantage to go to war against secular Jews instead of seeking reciprocal accommodation raises a question: Should one act tolerantly toward the intolerant?

Religious-secular warfare is clearly contrary to haredi principles. One principle that has guided haredi rabbis for centuries — and even in modern Israel — is never to provoke "the goyim." Surely the same principle applies to the non-Orthodox majority?

The haredi communities would be extremely vulnerable to secular retaliation in a religious-secular war, and it needn't come on Bar-Ilan itself. Hundreds of glatt-kosher butcher shops and other food purveyors are open to the kind of easy retaliation that could make haredi life very difficult in many parts of the country.

It would be the far greater part of wisdom for haredi leaders to seek accommodation with secular Israelis over the issue of Rehov Bar-Ilan. The overwhelming majority of the secular population will be ready to meet them halfway.

The writer comments on current affairs.

## Dead-end for democracy

THERE'S something odd about the insistence that one has a fundamental right to travel down a particular street at a particular hour. Roads, after all, get closed off all the time — for repairs, for parades, for security reasons, or simply to ease traffic management.

To keep Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan open during Shabbat or close it off? That is the question, and the way the violent religious-secular conflict over it is handled could threaten the future of democracy in this country, even though the issue itself may not appear to be of such fundamental importance.

While Shabbat is a pillar of Jewish tradition, not having one's Sabbath peace disturbed by potential Sabbath violators isn't. And while freedom of movement is central to individual liberty, the individual's freedom to take the shortest route to his destination won't be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or in any of Israel's basic laws.

The most important question raised by the confrontation over Rehov Bar-Ilan is: Can the people of this country and its capital really govern themselves; and can they through free and fair elections effect changes in rules — like those governing the movement of traffic — that impinge on their lives?

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were both elected at the head of coalitions that promised to close off Rehov Bar-Ilan to traffic during part of Shabbat.

Precisely because partial or total closure of a single street infringes on no one's basic liberties — that is to say, it raises no fundamental constitutional issues regarding freedom of religion or freedom from religion —

MICHAEL KOCHIN

it is the duty of the administrative apparatus of a democratic state, and that includes the judiciary, to carry out the decisions of those whom the people have democratically elected to make these decisions.

Instead the High Court saw fit on Friday to block implementation of the partial closure of

The High Court is using the machinery of the law to thwart the people's will

Rehov Bar-Ilan.

Apparently the justices reasoned according to the expressed view of Justice Aharon Barak, that a mere change of transportation minister — or, dare I say, of national government — does not suffice to legitimate an about-turn regarding a single street in Jerusalem.

Yet if a change of government cannot legitimately bring about the closure of Rehov Bar-Ilan, what can?

THE HIGH Court is using the machinery of the law to thwart the will of the people in a relatively small matter. But as has been clear to the friends of liberty throughout the West for centuries, it is only by exercising vigilance in small matters that we can prevent transgressions in greater ones.

By defending drivers' legitimate desire — but not their right — to drive down Rehov Bar-Ilan on Shabbat, the High Court has attacked the people's fundamental right to self-governance. And we ought not, surely, to be

astonished that such a violation of basic democratic liberties has only served to fuel the violence. The comparison may sound extreme, but by looking at a place like Algeria we can see the lives lost and economic ruin brought about when the state apparatus chooses to rule despite the people.

After more than 200 years of modern democracy, one lesson ought to be clear to those who fancy themselves the governors of the people. No amount of police violence will suffice to overturn the will of the people when the people aim to exercise their democratic rights.

If decisions, democratically arrived at, are insufficient to change state policy, then citizens have no recourse but to implement those decisions beyond the realm of law. And then it is only a question of time — and of blood — until they do implement them.

It would be both perverse and tragic if the conflict over the closure of one single street proved sufficient to push this country over from mob violence into revolutionary violence. I don't think it is sufficient.

Yet if the administrative apparatus of the state cannot realize the people's liberty of self-government in a small matter, a larger issue will soon similarly arise. And if and when it does, it will reignite the same sort of conflict, only this time with greater violence.

The state's capacity for brutal violence notwithstanding, such a conflict will eventually overturn those who seek to govern by thumbing their noses at democracy.

The writer teaches political philosophy at Tel Aviv University.

## In the raw

D'VORA BEN SHAUL

EVERYBODY loves nature. Sure they do.

The wide-open spaces, the great outdoors, getting away from it all... you know.

You load up the car with the sunscreen and the hats and the insect repellent and the water bottles and the styrofoam jug of something sweet to drink and, of course, the charcoal and the portable grill and the camping gas and a pan and a bottle of oil in case you want to make chips — oh, and the cooler-box.

Then you've got the salads and the mustard and pickles and ketchup and humous and tahina, the hamburgers and the frankfurters and the steaks and the chicken wings — and don't forget the barbecue sauce.

Oh yes — and the camera and the radio-cassette player and some cassettes and an aerosol of insecticide just in case there are ants or flies about.

Then you load up the family and the dog, and you're off to enjoy nature. Hopefully you haven't forgotten to provision yourself with some snacks for the short trip there; the children may be hungry.

In any case, how would they entertain themselves for a whole hour if they didn't have aluminum foil bags to hold out of the window? It's educational, see? The bag catches the air stream of the car, and when the pressure builds up it takes off, just the way the physics teacher explained about aerodynamics.

But the important thing is that after a few hours in a public park or planted forest with good picnic tables — or, if you live close enough, on the shores of the Kinneret — you go home happy because you've been out in nature.

Of course the nearest thing to nature you saw was the ants you sprayed away and the big black beetle you squashed; and you never heard a bird sing or the wind in the trees because a cassette was playing.

But as far as you're concerned you've been out in nature. And don't we all just love it?

UNFORTUNATELY the kind of confusion that makes people think everything out of town is nature.

We all love nature provided we have our grills and our kiosks and other conveniences...

lies at the root of some of our most serious environmental problems.

It was this confusion that led our very urban prime minister to put the Environment Ministry and the Agriculture Ministry together, although their aims and goals are totally contrary. Agriculture wants what the farmers feel is best for them; environmentalists want what is best for the total environment.

It was also this limited thinking that made the newly-appointed agriculture and environment minister decide, as one of his very first moves, to combine the National Parks Authority with the Nature Reserves Authority. Here again the conflict between the interests of the two organizations is so great as to make them the most impossible bedfellows.

The duty of the Parks Authority is to provide as much convenience and comfort as possible in scenic recreational areas throughout the country. This means more picnic areas, more cookout sites, more kiosks, wider and straighter roads, easier walking paths and all the other services visitors require.

The Nature Reserves Authority, on the other hand, is there to protect and preserve natural settings and wildlife in as natural a condition as possible. Needless to say, this isn't always compatible with more public services and accessibility.

It is no part of the purpose or responsibility of the Nature Reserves Authority to address itself to the needs of any sector of the public — except those who want to visit nature as it is.

Such a visit may not suit small children, the family dog is definitely not welcome, and your radio could scare away animals, which would be a pity. But for those who want a real taste of nature, the authority provides the minimal conditions that make this possible.

Don't get me wrong. There is a place for parks and gardens. They are lovely, and I enjoy them. But they shouldn't be confused with nature. My fear is that such confusion may, in the long run, deprive us of a rare national treasure.

The writer contributes an environmental column to The Jerusalem Post.

דבורה בן שאול

JP 11/15/96

# 'Mister, this isn't Ethiopia'

### An Ethiopian woman gives counsel to a community still coming to terms with Israeli culture, Sylvia Benjamin-Lief reports



Hannah Dessie of Haifa's Isha l'Isha with an Ethiopian immigrant support group.

(Eyal Lammam)

"Six years ago," says Carol Goldgeier, "an Ethiopian woman called us from her social worker's office to complain that her husband was abusing her. We felt that the situation was very grave, and we gave the social worker the numbers of all the shelters in Israel so that the woman could be taken out of her home immediately. Unfortunately, she did not take her social worker's advice, and went home. That evening her husband killed her and her three children."

According to Goldgeier, resource development coordinator at the Haifa Feminist Center "Isha Le'Isha," of the many women who die each year as a result of violence against them by their family members, "the number of victims among immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia is greater than in the rest of the Israeli population. This got us thinking about a project to help Ethiopian immigrant women."

The project was initiated in 1994, and as part of its promotion campaign, Isha Le'Isha and the Rape Crisis Center (two of the four agencies of the Women's Coalition), printed a pamphlet in Amharic on its services. "We're also trying to reach out to Ethiopian community leaders who we know are essential in helping the project work," claims Goldgeier, and Hannah Dessie has played an important role in our organizations.

Dessie, who joined Isha Le'Isha in 1994, has been running support and environmental groups for Ethiopian women in five locations in the north. Two of them are in her hometown Nazareth Illit, and throughout the week she commutes to the other three in Tira and Neveh Carmel near Haifa, and Hatzot Yasaf near Acre.

Her college education in Addis Ababa and her training at the center have qualified her to counsel women on many issues. She has lectured, held discussions, and given personal support in family, social and educational affairs including women's health, personal security, and issues of violence.

The women discuss the issue of raising children in Israel, and problems connected with schools stemming from the difficulties of immigrating to an unfamiliar society. Dessie also talks to them about sexual violence in terms of women's legal rights. She tells them whom they can turn to, and advises them on the procedure involved in dealing with the various authorities.

At first, Dessie hesitated to speak openly, for fear publicity might do more harm than good for the women who flee to the coalition for shelter. Now, however, having become active at the rape crisis center this year, she offers her opinions.

"In Ethiopia there was no such thing as incest. The first time I ever heard of such a thing was on Israeli TV. I was shocked. Now, for the last four years, I have been hearing about such cases in my own community. It is dreadful. A shame. [Community members'] values have changed. They've lost their self-respect."

She is convinced the community's moral deterioration is due to exposure to the media here. But the coalition's coordinators tend to disagree. They regard the increased number of incoming calls to the battered women's telephone hot lines, another of the coalition's services, as irrefutable

proof of the Ethiopian community's growing awareness. The more than 150 volunteer staff who have been trained by a paid staff of 40 female social workers, or students in the profession, contribute thousands of work hours at these hot lines. They counsel women in person and over the phone, and even accompany them in crisis situations to hospitals, the courts and the police.

"It is important for women to feel comfortable in sharing their problems," says Nina Mizrahi, general coordinator of the coalition's four sections. "Before Hannah came along, we couldn't get the Ethiopian women to recognize the importance of getting together on a regular basis. Whenever she has worked, Hannah has had a high level of success. Many women participate in her meetings and there is a great sense of satisfaction."

"The women talk to her after the meetings and tell her how important it is and how they've waited for her to come. Also, they recall how things were different before she came to meet with them."

"The root of our problem is the new language and new customs," says Dessie. It is very difficult for our community. For example, marital problems in the villages in Ethiopia are solved by parents or the elders. We are very secretive

and don't share our problems with outsiders."

Married life was smoother in Ethiopia, she believes, because a woman knew her rightful place. It was in the home. If she didn't satisfy her husband's demands, he would beat her. "Nobody got killed and there were no problems, but here social workers show the woman her rights. A woman must learn a trade and work outside the home while a man waits at home alone."

Dessie says that most of the community's women have grasped Hebrew and local customs faster than have the men. She thinks this is a source of jealousy and even causes husbands to become suspicious of wives. "The social worker tells him, 'Mister, this isn't Ethiopia, this is Israel. Here you must give a woman her freedom.' He vents his frustration on his wife and children, blaming them for the social worker's intrusion and his loss of pride."

The elders too have suffered a blow to their dignity, says Dessie: "My father-in-law insists that my husband and I take him to visit his brother who lives far away. He wants us to skip work and doesn't understand our refusal and lack of respect."

Dessie tries to help mothers cope with educational problems. "The schoolchildren have a tough time

too. For example, a boy of 14 comes here, and they give him a test with a psychologist. They show him all sorts of shapes. How should he know what to do? Where could he learn this? In Ethiopia he was in a village helping his father."

She suggests that the authorities could do more to understand the Ethiopians. "A school principal might recommend special education just because she interprets a child's respectful behavior as stupidity. They don't know us," she says, referring to the social workers and the educational system, "and they don't really want to learn our culture and customs. If they want to get along with us and help us, they should try to understand us better."

However, coordinator Mizrahi is optimistic and says there has been an increased number of referrals by professionals who work with the Ethiopian community but lack the skills or the knowledge of the culture to deal with the victims themselves.

Recently the municipal department of social welfare asked Dessie to set up a women's empowerment group in the Geshet Paz district of Haifa. For Dessie, this will mean giving up more hours from her tightly scheduled day. As it is, she often returns home from work around midnight. But she feels that she cannot refuse to help where she can.

# A time spot for each child

PARENTING  
RUTH MASON

WE RECENTLY ran a column in which readers shared memories that they had of their childhoods that made them feel most loved. By far the most popular memory was that of one-on-one time spent with a parent away from the disruptions of sibling and household demands.

This kind of time, rare in busy families, is precious to a child and helps to develop trust and self-esteem. The following are some suggestions, adapted from guidelines drawn up by the International Reevaluation Counseling Communities, on how to spend special time with your child.

1. Because it's hard for many parents to focus their attention solely on their child without thinking about the laundry that needs to be folded or that stubborn work problem they haven't been able to solve, try to limit the special time to a half hour or an hour.

It's helpful to have it at the same time each week so the child can begin to look forward to this regular block of time that is "all his." Arrange things so that you will not be interrupted by the telephone, doorbell or other family members' needs. Sometimes it works best to be out of the house.

2. Try to choose a time when you're feeling good. If you're upset, overly tired, preoccupied or just in a bad mood, it will be hard to focus attention and good feelings

on your child.

3. Let your child choose the activity (or no activity) for this period of time and try to go with it. If your son or daughter wants to play video games and you don't know what's flying, try sitting there with him and being a one-person cheering squad.

If you're spending special time with a baby, get down on the floor with him or her and just be there, while watching and paying attention to him or her.

As the guidelines state: "During special time, your child is in charge of her relationship with you. This reversal of the usual balance of power lets your child communicate with you about things she cannot entrust to you in the everyday bustle of family life with its many interruptions and speedy pace."

4. Focus on the positive in your child, the things you most love about him. Try and show that in your expression and tone. Keep letting him know, by your expression, touch and tone of voice, that you are paying attention to and enjoying his company.

5. Follow your child's lead and keep showing approval. Don't offer your own ideas or direction. This is his time. If you had a hard time during special time, find a caring friend or relative to talk to and try to get out whatever feelings you had. That should make it easier the next time. Good luck!

# TV networks have the last laugh

IF you can't make them laugh, you can always fake them laughing.

Pre-recorded chuckles and applause - known as sweetening - have flavored television programs for four decades despite the sour taste it leaves in some mouths.

Comedians tend to shy away from such artificial approval. Viewers gripe about being overrun by fake guffaws. One producer, Jay Tarses, has tried banning laugh tracks from his series.

But nearly every comedy ever on TV - not to mention game shows, rock and comedy concerts and awards ceremonies including the Oscars and the Emmys - has been sweetened.

The few sitcoms that tried to go without tended to be short-lived. Talk about the last laugh.

Laugh-track pioneer Carroll Pratt contends that the entertainment industry has learned to judiciously use a process it once abused.

"It's not a dishonest profession anymore," Pratt said. "The need has been seen, and since it's become more conservative I think they're [critics] living with us OK."

Only news programs, dramas and sports events are exempt from the wizards of mirth, technicians who sit at small, putty-colored consoles and use 12 buttons and three levers to coax audience tapes into a symphony of glee.

Titters, chuckles, belly laughs, catcalls and more are part of the mix.

Pratt began working in the late 1950s with Charles Douglas, who invented a laugh machine while at the CBS network, and has doctored shows ranging from I Love Lucy to It's Garry Shandling's Show.

It all started honorably enough, says the semiretired Pratt. Radio listeners were used to getting laughs

with their programs, the sound of studio audiences picked up by microphones. Conventional wisdom also decreed that the communal laughter enjoyed by movie audiences was vital to making TV comedies work.

Originally, canned laughs were used to fill in when scenes were added or changed after an audience had viewed a show, Pratt said.

Later, a spate of series were filmed without an audience, like The Donna Reed Show and Father Knows Best, and required technicians to provide all the reaction.

Eventually, says Pratt, "it got out of control" as producers and writers pushed for bigger chuckles. The public began to rebel.

"The major complaint was we were laughing at things that weren't funny. Then we got letters saying we don't need some guy pushing a button to tell us when to laugh," he recalled.

The industry finally began practicing restraint - to an extent.

"In pilot seasons, things are over-laughed terribly," Pratt says, referring to the showcase period when producers try to sell shows to the networks.

There are other attempts to cheat a little.

"Some producers bring in all of their underlings and writers and get close to an audience mike and yuck it up," he said. "It's bad in one area because the writers, knowing the gag is coming, usually start laughing before it spills."

"You don't make a joke funny by laughing at it," Pratt said. (AP)

# China's population: Dream or nightmare?

THE population of China has doubled in the last 40 years and now stands at 1.2 billion.

The communist regime originally preached that a huge population meant strength and in the early years of their rule discussion of birth control was taboo. But by the mid-1950s the concern felt by many economists and planners was beginning to be made public.

Professor Ma Yinchu of Peking University warned in 1957 that shortly after 2000 the population of China would reach some two billion, more than the population of the world at the time he spoke.

In fact it is unlikely to be quite as big as that. Recent press reports in China suggest the figure will be between 1.30 and 1.32 billion by 2000.

But at the time that sort of warning appeared to be taken seriously, at least in cities. Exhibitions on birth control were packed, the price of contraceptives was drastically reduced, and clinics were crowded with people seeking advice. All sorts of bizarre methods of birth control were put forward.

The tiny and ancient General Shao Lin, who had been governor of Shanxi province under Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, told the National People's Congress, China's parliament, of a country remedy.

Women, he said, should "take 14 tadpoles less than 14 days old and swallow them live. The following day they should take 10 more and barrenness is guaranteed for five years. At the end of five years take the same dose again and you are barren for the rest of your days."

Someone wrote to the People's Daily complaining that "Chinese-made pregnancy-avoiding wrappers have weak sides and should be avoided."

But a year later, as the radical campaign dubbed the Great Leap Forward got under way, Chairman Mao Zedong displayed the flexibility of his ideology that was to become a characteristic of his later years.

He had earlier mentioned the dangers of an uncontrolled birthrate in a section of his important speech "On Contradictions," which at that time was unpub-

lished.

In 1958 Mao declared that "with every stomach comes another pair of hands" and that "under the leadership of the Communist Party miracles can be wrought as long as there are men."

Professor Ma, 77, was dismissed. Others were silenced and birth control was once more termed a rightist notion.

China was entering a four-year-long famine, which turned out to be the worst in world history, and which American demographers calculate claimed 30 million lives.

The famine was mainly the result of policies and directives from Mao as part of the Great Leap Forward. Yet he told a conference that "it will be found that the amount of arable land is not too little but too much, and it is not a question of over-population but rather a shortage of manpower."

China is still suffering from this policy. The baby boomers have now reached child-bearing age. The present leaders have pointed out that the country has to support 22 percent of the world's population on about seven percent of its

arable land.

Consequently in 1980 a strict one-child-per-family law was promulgated. Stiff financial penalties are imposed on those who disobey, though for a time it was relaxed in country areas where it was highly unpopular.

The great drop in the mortality rate since the communists came to power in 1949 means that China's is an aging society.

Chinese tradition has always been that children look after their parents in old age; thus the more the better. But the Communist Party secretary of southern Guangdong Province said in an

interview that with the great increase in people's spending power, many felt they no longer had to rely on children to look after them when they were old.

Population controls have often not been imposed on ethnic minorities such as Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongols. This has meant that their numbers have grown more rapidly than those of the Han Chinese who make up 90 percent of the population.

Minorities rose by 35 percent between the 1983 census and that of 1990, while the Han increase was 11 percent. (Reuters)

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

## Israel, Jordan, US launch joint investment project

KEREN MARKUZE

A trilateral pilot program aimed at supporting industrial R&D is being launched by the US, Israel and Jordan, with the goal of introducing new products and technologies into the marketplace.

Known as Project TRIDE, for Trilateral Industrial Development, the program is meant to demonstrate that public-private partnership can efficiently generate new jobs, markets, and income for all three countries.

This effort is directly connected to the peace process. "Peace must be cemented with economic realities," said Jordanian Ambassador Omar Risa'i. According to US Ambassador Martin Indyk, to ensure lasting peace, "it is essential for all sides to improve material circumstances of people of each region."

"This is an example of how the private sector can be the engine of the peace train, creating a more interactive, integrated Middle East market," Indyk added.

The three governments will contribute a total of \$1 million, or 50 percent of the costs. The other half will come from three private companies chosen to participate in the venture. Professional and technical support will be provided by the Israel-US Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD).

On the Jordanian side, the project is to be run by the Jordan Investment Promotion Corp. (JIPC) which became operational last January following the passing of legislation that entrusts the corporation with giving direct financial assistance to business ventures.

According to JIPC director-general Dr. Taleb Risa'i, this law was part of Jordan's continuing effort to improve its economy by emphasizing government investment rather than relying on foreign funding.

Suggested areas of trilateral investment include communication technologies, tourism, agriculture, education, and health.

"The complementarity between what the advanced Israeli society has to offer and the reasonably priced cost of production and the educated workforce we have to offer can put together a good package," said Risa'i.

## Petition: Gov't should give better treatment to provident funds

EVELYN GORDON

THE government's preferential treatment of pension funds compared to provident funds is one of the main reasons behind the public's current flight from provident funds, a petition to the High Court of Justice charged yesterday.

The petition, filed by the Association of Banks in Israel on behalf of the banks' provident funds, demanded that the government provide the provident funds with a "safety net" similar to that given to pension funds, to guarantee provident fund investors a minimal rate of return.

The pension funds' safety net comes from special government bonds which bear a 5% interest rate - far more than the market rate. Provident funds, however, are not allowed to buy these bonds, even

though "hundreds of thousands" of people, according to the petition, use provident funds to save toward their pensions. Being at the mercy of the market, provident funds frequently achieve lower rates of return than pension funds, and this makes it impossible for them to compete with pension funds, the petition said.

This is one of the main reasons that the public is abandoning provident funds, the petition said.

At one time, the petition noted, provident funds and insurance companies also enjoyed the special bonds, but once the government stopped issuing them, the understanding was it would soon

stop issuing them to pension funds as well, said attorney Moti Arad, who prepared the petition.

However, the pension fund rescue plan approved by the government in March 1995 made it clear the government intends to continue providing pension funds with the special bonds for the foreseeable future, and this was a severe blow to provident funds, Arad said.

"This decision was one of the factors, and maybe even a central factor, in sending a message to the public that provident funds do not have the government's backing," Arad said. Insurance companies are also discriminated against in this respect, and the Association of Insurance Companies has filed a similar petition to the court which is still pending.

## Porush supports expanding Jerusalem corridor across Green Line

DAVID HARRIS

DEPUTY Construction and Housing Minister Meir Porush called for the continued development of the Jerusalem corridor on both sides of the Green Line during a tour of the Beit Shemesh and Betar areas yesterday.

"In the Labor Party, as well, there are many people who say we should build in certain places that are linked to Greater Jerusalem, in order to re-enforce Jerusalem," he said.

As part of the plan to extend the city's western periphery, the ministry hopes to build 60,000 new homes in Ramat Beit Shemesh, Betar, and Tzur Hadassah. Link roads would be built from Betar to Gush Etzion and Highway 39 would link the area to Jerusalem's Ein Kerem entrance.

Ministry officials said yesterday they are pressuring the Industry

and Trade Ministry to construct several industrial parks in the area, including a "Silicon Valley" area at the Latrun Junction off Highway 1.

The planned expansion of Tzur Hadassah and the construction of Highway 39 has been opposed by some local residents and many environmentalists.

The proposed expansion of Betar, meanwhile, which is over the Green Line, is not linked to politics, "but merely a decision based on professional judgments," said the ministry's head of Jerusalem region Rina Zamir. She also called for improvements in the Tel Aviv to Jerusalem rail line as soon as possible which, she said, would reduce commuting time from Bet Shemesh to major employment areas.

## Central bank denies call for NIS 3b. budget cuts in '96

DAVID HARRIS

THE Bank of Israel denied reports yesterday that Governor Jacob Frenkel is suggesting the government make an additional NIS 3 billion cuts this year.

The cabinet has agreed to implement NIS 350 million cuts for 1996, but it is known that Frenkel is pressing for further savings. Bank officials said they could not confirm that the governor wants to see such large cuts, but admitted that he hopes additional savings will be made this year.

Before the cabinet agreed to the '96 and '97 budget savings program earlier this month, Frenkel had said he wanted to achieve a savings of NIS 6b. over the next 18 months. With the cabinet having set a savings target of NIS 4.9b. next year, that would imply he had asked Finance Minister Dan Meridor for

additional cuts of at least NIS 1b. this year.

Meridor is said to be closely monitoring implementation of this year's budget and said yesterday he will do his best to prevent any deviation from the target deficit.

The Finance Ministry document containing the cuts proposals states that this year's measures will not completely correct the deviation from the predicted annual budget deficit, but rather reduce it.

The previous government set a 1996 domestic deficit target of NIS 7.6b. After the first six months of the year, it stood at NIS 5.5b.

Among the savings agreed by ministers to be implemented this year are NIS 90m. from the Agriculture Ministry and NIS 73m. from the Defense Ministry.

## Up to 600,000 illegal foreign workers here - official

EVELYN GORDON

THERE could be as many as 600,000 illegal foreign workers here, head of the Interior Ministry's visa department Batsya Carmon told the Knesset State Control Committee yesterday.

Carmon told the committee that while the ministry has no accurate figures on the number of illegal workers, it could be as much as six times higher than the official estimate of 100,000.

The country has become a magnet for foreign workers, who either enter on forged documents or by posing as tourists, she said.

Interior Minister Eli Suissa said, however, that since there were no accurate figures, it was irresponsible to "throw out unrealistic numbers like 600,000."

Suissa did agree that illegal foreign workers were a serious problem, however, and noted that an interministerial committee had already been set up to look for ways to solve the problem.

The committee, which includes representatives from the Interior, Finance, Internal Security, and

Labor and Social Affairs Ministries, is supposed to submit its conclusions within 30 days.

State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat told the committee that legislation could help in several areas. One possibility would be to require foreign workers to be paid as much as their Israeli counterparts, which would eliminate the incentive for using foreigners. Another would be to provide incentives for contractors who switched from labor-intensive to high-tech building methods.

MK Yossi Katz (Labor) suggested setting up one government body to handle the problem of foreign workers, saying the current division of labor among four different ministries creates confusion and inefficiency.

Committee chairman Ran Cohen (Meretz) promised that the committee would initiate legislation on foreign workers. He suggested a law barring anyone found employing an illegal foreign worker from receiving additional permits to hire foreign workers legally.



Givatayim Mayor Efi Stantzer (center) joins pensioners from the Dan region who demonstrated outside the Knesset against the government's plans to cut pension rights. (Yoram Melibary)

## NY stocks suffer as Dow frets over high-tech firms

BACKGROUND  
FARRELL KRAMER

NEW YORK (AP) - The stock market that couldn't be stopped ran into trouble again on Monday, leading to speculation that five-and-a-half years of gains on Wall Street had come to a end.

The Dow Jones average, the market's most widely followed index, finished Monday down 161.05 points, or 2.9 percent, at 5,349.51, its steepest drop since March 8 and its lowest close since late January.

Concern about corporate profits triggered the slump, particularly earnings in the important technology sector. Profits drive stocks more than anything else, and word of weakness can quickly shake confidence.

Last Thursday, the Dow lost more than 83 points following an announcement late Wednesday by computer maker Hewlett-Packard that slowing orders would hurt sales and profits.

A day earlier, chip maker Motorola had announced disappointing earnings.

Ironically, no stunning earnings were reported Monday and no major economic news was released to trigger the steep plunge.

The market's weakened position - the Dow is 7.4% off its May 22 record high - suggests to many on Wall Street that new records aren't likely for some time.

"The game has changed and the tide has turned," said Stan Weinstein, publisher of the Professional Tape Reader, a market newsletter.

While it was the Dow's fourth-worst point drop, it was not even close to being among the largest falls in percentage terms. That happened Oct. 19, 1987, when the

Dow plummeted 508.00 points to 1,738.74 - a 22.6% decline.

Other market averages also saw significant erosion Monday, especially the Nasdaq composite index. The Nasdaq, home to companies like Microsoft and Intel, saw its main index lose 3.9% of its value, leaving it ahead less than 1% for the year.

For years, Wall Street has taken care of investors, moving generally and predictably upward, backed by the leadership of technology companies. The market has also snapped back powerfully after big declines.

That has begun to change. Following last Thursday's drop, the market tried to rally but failed, ending almost 10 points lower on Friday. Going back another week to July 5, traders not taking a long holiday weekend saw the Dow lose almost 115 points over concerns about a too-strong economy and possible inflation.

The next trading day the Dow followed up by losing more than 37 points. Still, not all say the good times are entirely over.

"Markets are not created by the economy, they're created by human emotion," said A. Michael Lipper, president of Lipper Analytical Services Inc., a research firm.

"We've just had such a remarkable run. This is a correction. OK. We're still up on the year."

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## BARGAINS

(Continued from Page 1)

and savings plans, they seek money out of the stock market.  
3) Stock markets around the world have been tumbling, led by Wall Street. As the saying goes, when Wall Street sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold.

**Why are people fleeing the provident funds?**

The process is partly circular. Provident funds mostly own bonds, together with some stocks. Both have been falling lately. Fearing that their provident fund holdings are dropping in value, savers bail out for the safety of bank deposits.

**What should one do with provident funds?**

That depends. If you've been saving for less than 15 years you are not yet liquid, so exiting would incur a big tax bill that would far exceed any short-term losses you've incurred. If you've been in for more than 15 years, you can withdraw your money without penalty. If you don't like volatility you're probably best off, but if you can live with the ups and downs, now might not be the time to pull out.

With stock and bond prices where they are now, the funds' portfolios should provide reasonable long-term returns in the future. Locking into savings plans, the main alternative, is

safe, but your money is tied up for years at a time.

**Is the market going to continue falling?**

In the short term that's impossible to predict. But many observers are of the view that we're already at a level where there are a lot of bargains around. Eventually the market will rebound. The likely trigger will be a cut in interest rates, which will happen when the Bank of Israel feels confident inflation is coming under control.

**Is there anything the government can do?**

Not really, beyond trying to prevent panic. Historically, efforts in various markets to artificially boost sagging stock prices have met with very limited success. Anyway, markets typically overshoot in both directions.

**What should I do with my money?**

That depends very much on you. If you have the patience and the nerves to be able to watch your money lose 10 percent of its value in a couple of weeks, blue-chip stocks and mutual funds look temptingly priced right now. If you don't have the temperament, savings plans and government bonds are offering fat, safe, index-linked yields.

The writer, a former business editor of the Post, now works in the investment industry.

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**PRE-CONDITIONS APPLYING TO THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:**

A. A guarantee of 5% of the bid total, in the form of a private check, should be attached to the bid, except for tenders requesting technical information only (Stage A).

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The tender documents may be obtained Sunday - Thursday, at the Market Research and Tenders Dept., 11 Sderot Pal-Yam, Haifa, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, on submission of a receipt, demonstrating payment (non-returnable) of the cost of the documents into the Corporation's account at the Postal Bank. Payment slips for making such payments are obtainable at the above address (Tel. 04-8615453/4). Before purchasing the tender documents, they may be perused Sunday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 12 noon, at the offices of the Market Research and Tenders Dept. at the above address, and at the Sales Unit, 90 Rehov Yigal Alon, Tel Aviv, Ashdar building, Entrance B, Floor 1, Tel. 03-5654679, 03-5654641.

Bids should be submitted in a sealed envelope, and be placed in Tenders Box No. 1, in the Pal-Yam building, Haifa (address as above) by the last date for submitting bids, as stated above.

No undertaking is given to accept the lowest or any bid.

**NOTE:** In appropriate cases, the Electric Corporation will give preference to suppliers, in accordance with the Tenders Regulations (Preference for Locally Produced Goods, and Obligation to Extend Commercial Cooperation).  
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**ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS**

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (20.6.96)

Currency (deposit term)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.625	4.875	5.075
U.S. dollar (\$50,000)	4.625	4.875	5.075
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.875	1.875	2.375
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	1.000	1.000	1.500

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates\* (16.7.96)

CURRENCY BASKET	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rates**
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U.S. dollar	3.1590	3.2100	2.05	2.16	3.1850
German mark	2.1292	2.1292	2.05	2.05	2.1235
French franc	4.9062	4.9654	4.82	4.82	4.9508
Japanese yen (100)	0.6180	0.6280	0.60	0.64	0.6254
Japanese yen (100)	2.8804	2.9289	2.83	2.97	2.9081
Swiss franc	1.8659	1.8659	1.88	1.98	1.8813
Swedish krona	2.6417	2.6827	2.48	2.62	2.5850
Norwegian krona	0.4702	0.4778	0.46	0.49	0.4758
Danish krona	0.4893	0.4962	0.47	0.51	0.4824
Finland mark	0.5484	0.5607	0.57	0.58	0.5608
Canadian dollar	0.6885	0.6907	0.67	0.68	0.6872
Australian dollar	2.3046	2.3418	2.26	2.36	2.3209
S. African rand	2.5043	2.5447	2.46	2.55	2.5158
Belgian franc (10)	0.7111	0.7228	0.64	0.73	0.7157
Austrian schilling (10)	1.0107	1.0331	0.99	1.05	1.0310
Italian lira (1000)	2.9779	3.0229	2.92	3.07	3.0178
Jordanian dinar	2.0580	2.0823	2.02	2.07	2.0545
Egyptian pound	4.3800	4.8000	4.38	4.80	4.4300
Irish punt	0.3000	0.3000	0.30	0.30	1.0272
Spanish peseta (100)	3.8558	4.0185	3.85	4.00	4.0075
	5.0430	5.1244	4.85	5.20	5.1008
	2.4827	2.5228	2.44	2.58	2.5161

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Other stock market indexes
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NYSE/AMEX
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Cocoa Beans (C2D) ... 1359.00 -0.40
Coffee Beans (C2C) ... 100.00 -0.25

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Further market plunge prompts gov't action

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET
FELICE MARANZ
Two-Sided index ... 169.36 -4.94%
Maof index ... 179.52 -5.21%

STOCK prices fell for the tenth straight day, plunging five percent and prompting government action designed to curb withdrawals from provident funds and to ease concern in the capital markets.

The Two-Sided Index fell 4.94% to 169.36 while the Maof Index dropped 5.21% to 179.52. Some NIS 98 million of shares were traded, 56% more than the daily average for July.

The Bank of Israel said it plans to institute a guaranteed minimum return for provident funds. Eran Goren, fund manager at Zamex Securities said, "It's not a crisis. The market is not at 140, it's not at 120. It's the beginning of a structural change" in the way people here save and invest.

pulling money out of provident funds because the government forms an economic plan," he said. "They will continue to pull money out and have more control over their money."

Also hurting local stocks was Monday's drop on Wall Street, said Zvi Hoffman, mutual fund manager and head of the International Department at Meitar.

Israeli shares traded in New York "went down sharply, except for Teva and Scitec," Hoffman said. Examples include ECI Telecom, which dropped 2-13/16 to 19-13/16, Tadiran, off 1/4 to 22 1/4, Koor, down 1/4 at 16 1/4, Elron Electronic, which dropped 1/4 to 9 1/4, and Accent Software, which sank 4% to 22 1/4.

Teva was unchanged at 34 1/4 while Scitec eased 1/4 to 16 1/4.

Euro bourses fall in response to Dow

LONDON (Reuters) - Reassuring US data and earnings news yesterday helped Wall Street rally briefly from Monday's battering and raised European bourses from their lows, but a recovery on both sides of the Atlantic ran out of steam.

On currency markets, the dollar sank more than two pence against the mark, its biggest one-day fall this year, hit by selling across the board after it dropped below 1.50 marks.

"A lot of people have been long (of) dollars and were holding out for new highs," said David Coleman, chief economist at CIBC Wood Gundy. "What we're seeing now is a bit of clearout."

The dollar hit its lowest level for three months against the mark, undermined by concern over further share market weakness in New York and a move back into the German currency.

US consumer price and industrial production figures produced no surprises and soothed fears over inflation pressures and higher US interest rates, but the relief they provided for stock markets was short-lived.

Markets in Europe and Asia had taken fright after Wall Street's fourth largest fall in points terms on Monday, hit by concern over poor corporate profits.

Financial analysts said gloom over European market prospects might be overdone, but share prices might have to fall further in the near term if investors trimmed investments until they had a clearer idea of business prospects.

"A lot of the factors driving the US are very specific to that market," said David Bowers, strategist at Merrill Lynch.

"In Europe we don't have anything like the same sort of very high earnings expectations, and my sense is that Europe should outperform in this environment," he added.

But US strategist Tim O'Dell cautioned: "It's a fool's game to try to call the turning points. Our view is that there is a correction under way that is not complete and the dynamics of the market are not comfortable yet."

"The (US) statistics are good but people remain wary about the earnings figures," a Paris-based broker added.

Bargain-hunters swooped on leading US shares in early trading yesterday.

In early trading the Dow Jones industrial average was up around 45 points, reclaiming a chunk of Monday's 161-point loss, but by the time European markets closed it showed a deficit of around 11 points and continued to lose momentum.

The London stock market, Europe's largest, pulled back from its lowest levels this year but still ended with a loss of 66 points or 1.78 percent, its biggest fall for 26 months. It dropped 30 points on the previous day.

French shares ended a roller-coaster day down 1.97%, although above their lows, after a sharp late decline.

"The (US) statistics are good but people remain wary about the earnings figures," one Paris broker said. Results of key computer chip maker Intel are due after Wall Street closes.

"The market is at a crossroads. There are a lot of uncertainties and it is no good to play the hero," said Jean-Francois LeGoux, partner at SBC Brinson SA in Paris.

"This was an orderly retreat," said Josh Waiblinger of BHF Bank in Frankfurt as the market there lost 3% in value.

Stocks bounce back to end up on record volume

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Stocks roared back from massive losses to close higher on record volume yesterday as bargain hunters swooped in to buy battered shares.

Based on early and unofficial data, the Dow Jones industrial average ended up 9.25 points at 5,358.76 after a bungee-like swing of nearly 220 points from a high of 5,402.04 to a low of 5,182.32.

In the broader market, declining issues swamped advances 3-1 on record volume of 683 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange.

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# Report: Hizbullah negotiating trade for MIA bodies

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN and news agencies

GERMANY is mediating a possible swap of the remains of two Israeli MIAs for Shi'ite Moslem prisoners held by Israel, Hizbullah said yesterday.

"Our talks with the Germans are still going on for the swap of the remains of the two Israeli soldiers...The talks are within the context of Hizbullah efforts to free the captives in Israeli prisons and Khiam jail," a Hizbullah official told Reuters.

Israeli officials would not confirm or deny the reported negotiations.

The officials added that Israel held Hizbullah responsible for the fate of the two bodies. This is not the first time that reports have surfaced over a possible swap between Hizbullah and Israel.

The remains are believed to be those of Yosef Fink and Rahamim Alsheikh. They were captured in a south Lebanon ambush in 1986 and apparently later killed. Israel was informed three years ago, during negotiations for the release of Western hostages held in Lebanon, that Hizbullah held the bodies of these two men.

German government spokesman Peter Hausmann said in Bonn that he was unaware of any German mediation effort.

The German government said in May that Bernd Schmidbauer, the top intelligence

aid to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, was on a secret mission to Beirut that month with Israeli approval.

Germany has never officially confirmed the purpose, but government officials were quoted as saying at the time that Schmidbauer met Hizbullah members to mediate the release of corpses of Israeli soldiers.

A Hizbullah leader has said that Israel holds 70 Lebanese prisoners in Israel and its South Lebanese Army ally holds about 200 Lebanese at Khiam in the security zone.

Hizbullah Deputy Secretary-General Naem Qassem last week freed two captured SLA fighters, but said the group would keep the remains of the two Israeli soldiers for a future exchange deal.

Among Hizbullah captives in Israel is cleric Sheikh Abdel Karim Obeid, captured by Israeli commandos in 1989.

Qassem has accused Israel of aborting a number of exchange proposals by linking the fate of Lebanese detainees with the unknown fate of Israeli pilot Ron Arad, captured in 1986 after his plane was downed over south Lebanon.

Israel has in the past said Arad was in the hands of Iranians or their followers in Lebanon and insisted he should be part of any deal to free Lebanese prisoners.

## Ya'alon: Hizbullah is violating Grapes of Wrath understanding

LIAT COLLINS

HIZBULLAH is violating the understandings reached at the end of Operation Grapes of Wrath, IDF Intelligence Chief Moshe Ya'alon told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday.

Ya'alon said that from Israel's point of view the organization is breaching the understandings by returning to villages and using them as a shelter after an operation.

The intelligence head said attacks in South Lebanon in the last couple of weeks were related to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the US, "as a sort of political statement by the Syrians."

"Attempted attacks and preparations for possible Katyusha attacks had increased recently," he said.

He also told the committee that Iran is giving full support to Hizbullah, arming it and training it for activities. The aid Iran gives to Hizbullah amounts to millions of dollars, Ya'alon said. Hamas is also being supported by the Iranians, but unlike Hizbullah, it has its own policies.

Ya'alon said Iran's "fingerprints" in helping terror organizations are seen around the world. A partial list of countries in which Iran is helping terror groups attempting to topple the current regime includes: Bosnia; the Philippines; Thailand; China; Turkey; the Islamic republics in the CIS; Lebanon; Jordan; Saudi Arabia; and the Gulf states.

Iran is trying to become a regional power and hopes to obtain non-conventional weapons and ground-to-ground missiles, he said. The US embargo is not effective because the European states are not cooperating. Russia and China are also helping Iran develop non-conventional weapons. Iran's national agenda places terror activities in the first place, despite the country's difficult economic situation, he said.

In answer to a question by Meretz leader Yossi Sarid, Ya'alon said the IDF intelligence has not altered its assessment that Syria has undergone a strategic change. When the security element of Syria's defense budget is low, it is a sign the country is not going to war, he said. President Assad understands that he can obtain the Golan Heights only by negotiations, not war. However, from Assad's point of view the test will be Israel's moves.

"I dare say from this point of view if the Israeli government gave him a firm commitment according to which he would receive the Golan Heights he would go for something [an arrangement]," Ya'alon said. "Peace and normalization is, in his view, the price that has to be paid."

Ya'alon said a unilateral withdrawal without an agreement with Syria or a security agreement would mean terror activities in Galilee.



Labor MK Ophir Pines (right) takes his seat at a meeting yesterday of Labor MKs and haredi representatives on the conflict over Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan. Also seated are MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism) and Labor MK Ephraim Sneh. (Efraim Klishok)

## Labor MKs discuss Rehov Bar-Ilan conflict with haredi representatives

LIAT COLLINS

LABOR MKs met yesterday with haredi representatives to discuss the closure of Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan, but the encounter succeeded primarily in highlighting disagreements within Labor on the issue.

The only result was a decision to create a joint committee to examine possible solutions and to try and defuse the tension. Both the meeting and the special committee were initiatives of Labor faction chairman Ra'anan Cohen, who summed up the meeting by saying: "I can feel the tension in the air. It's a dangerous atmosphere. It was easier to make an agreement in Oslo than to make an agreement here."

During the often stormy meeting, some MKs, including Ephraim Sneh, Yona Yahav and faction whip Ephraim Oshaya sided with the haredim on many points, while Uzi Baram, Ophir Pines and Dalia Itzik fumed against closing the road. Baram, however, also voiced anger at what he described as an attempt by Meretz to present itself as the only representative of the secular population.

Pines spoke out against the Sturm Report, which calls for the road to be closed during prayer times.

"It's not a compromise, as no one is going to stand with a watch to see what the time is. The real question is how religious and secular live together," Pines said. Sneh spoke out against the convoy operated by Meretz activists on Shabbat calling it "an unnecessary provocation... We have to be considerate to our own people too," he said. "We in the Labor Party can't hurt public sensitivities. It's a haredi area. There are two cultures in this country and we must find the means

of coexistence." He proposed adopting the Sturm Report recommendations.

But his call for coexistence did not go down well with all his fellow Labor MKs. "I'm very worried by the tone I'm hearing from Ephraim [Sneh] and others," said Baram. "Suddenly after the elections there are new understandings in the party. I don't agree to it. The religious are taking over Jaffa Road and in another few months they'll want to close that, too. Common sense dictates preserving the status quo...."

"There is no reason to change the [party's] stand except for the bad conscience of some people in the party. For years we've been fighting the closure. This is a main road, not an alley," Baram said.

Yona Yahav took exception to Baram's tone. "Haredi Jews are not an enemy country. You're teaching your children to hate me. I'm a Jew."

Dalia Itzik, meanwhile, accused the haredim of teaching their children to hate the secular.

MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism), who also attended the meeting, said the lives of local residents "had been turned into a hell" because of the demonstrations by secular outsiders who deliberately ride down the road on Shabbat. He called on Labor MKs not to be influenced by Meretz "and let us live in peace."

Rabbi David Nahman Blau, who lives in the area, said all the residents along the road are religious. "Not even one percent are secular there. The government has built three alternative roads. For six days a week we suffer from the noise and cars. Let us have one day a week."

## Haredi leaders agree to call off Rehov Bar-Ilan Shabbat demo

BILL HUTMAN

HAREDI leaders have agreed to postpone the protest to demand the closure of Rehov Bar-Ilan that they had planned for Shabbat, Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Haim Miller (United Torah Judaism) said yesterday.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert asked for the postponement until after the High Court of Justice decision on the matter, he said.

The court is expected to rule next week on whether the government has the right to close the road during prayer times on Shabbat.

A police spokesman confirmed that Jerusalem Police chief Cmdr. Arye Amit was informed by haredi leaders that they had postponed their Shabbat protest. Meretz, which is leading the fight for the road to remain open, plans to stage a demonstration near Rehov Bar-Ilan this Shabbat.

In the meantime, haredi leaders have organized a prayer rally in Jerusalem tomorrow, calling for "the end of the desecration of the Shabbat that is occurring on Rehov Bar-Ilan," Miller said.

Miller noted that the government would have ordered Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan closed even if the Labor Party were still in power.

Several days before the election, then-health minister Ephraim Sneh met with Miller and other haredi leaders in his Jerusalem office. Sneh made a list of promises Labor hoped would convince haredim to support the candidacy of party leader Shimon Peres, Miller said.

"Sneh asked us to keep the promises quiet, because he thought it would cost his party some votes," Miller told *The Jerusalem Post*. (Full interview Friday.)

"They made a lot of promises. But for us, it was already too late. We were concerned with their record while in government, and not about their promises about the future," Miller said.

Sneh confirmed that he told Miller and haredi leaders from the Bar-Ilan area that a Labor government would close the road during prayer times, but denied that he wanted this to be kept a secret.

## Terrorist bomb-maker sentenced to two life terms

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

THE Lod military court sentenced a Palestinian bomb-maker to two consecutive life terms for assembling explosives and then dispatching the suicide bombers who blew themselves up last year on buses in Ramat Gan and Jerusalem's Ramat Eshkol neighborhood, killing nine people.

When he was captured, Abdel Nasser Atallah had additional bombs ready for blowing up more

buses, an army spokesman said. One of the judges, who voiced a minority opinion in the military tribunal, sought the death sentence for the "brutally and repeatedly attacking innocent people," the statement said.

Atallah, 23, was recruited and trained by Yihye Ayyash, the notori-

ous bomb-making mastermind of the Hamas military wing. Ayyash, known as the "Engineer," was killed in January by a booby-trapped cellular phone in Gaza.

A resident of the Balata refugee camp near Nablus, Atallah was convicted of masterminding the July 1995 suicide bombing on the No. 20

bus in Ramat Gan. Five people were killed and 33 injured in that attack. He was also convicted in the suicide bombing on the Jerusalem No. 19 bus a few weeks later. Four people were killed and 103 injured in that blast. MK Abdul Malik Dahamshe, a member of the Democratic Arab Party, acted as Atallah's defense attorney, the army said.

Registration procedures for the agency's new status are still under examination. Senior agency officials said they thought that the sudden change of Russian attitude towards the agency was connected to the presidential election campaign, but now that the campaign is over they don't understand what is holding up a decision of the Russian administration.

In Paris yesterday Burg declared that during the last three years there has been a considerable increase of immigration to Israel from France. This year the number of French immigrants is expected to increase to 2,400, a 30 percent rise from the previous year.

### WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear in north and center. Clear in the south. No change in temperatures.

### AROUND THE WORLD

City	Low	High	Forecast
Amsterdam	11	18	cloudy
Berlin	10	17	clear
Buenos Aires	20	28	cloudy
Chicago	18	25	clear
Guangzhou	28	35	clear
Hong Kong	28	35	clear
London	12	19	cloudy
Los Angeles	18	25	cloudy
Madrid	16	23	cloudy
Moscow	17	24	cloudy

### Winning cards and numbers

THE winning cards in yesterday's daily Chance draw were: Ace of spades, king of hearts, king of diamonds, and king of clubs.

The winning numbers in yesterday's weekly Lotto draw were: 6, 13, 22, 38, 40, 43. The supplementary number was 8.

## Burg optimistic about agency's future in Russia

ELDAD BECK

JEWISH Agency Chairman Avraham Burg says that two weeks after Russian President Boris Yeltsin's reelection the agency received "encouraging and positive" signals from Moscow concerning the future of the agency's activities in the Russian federation.

Prior to the Russian election campaign Russian justice authorities decided to reexamine the status of the local agency bureaus. Certain bureaus were closed under orders from the Russian Justice Ministry. Some officials in Moscow accused the agency of illegal activities and "brain smuggling."

Registration procedures for the agency's new status are still under examination. Senior agency officials said they thought that the sudden change of Russian attitude towards the agency was connected to the presidential election campaign, but now that the campaign is over they don't understand what is holding up a decision of the Russian administration.

In Paris yesterday Burg declared that during the last three years there has been a considerable increase of immigration to Israel from France. This year the number of French immigrants is expected to increase to 2,400, a 30 percent rise from the previous year.

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D. ZEBRAS: PATTERNS IN THE GRASS	W. AFRICAN WILDLIFE
E. BRAVING ALASKA	X. RAIN FOREST
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H. THE URBAN GORILLA	
I. CATS: CARESSING THE TIGER	
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K. THE INVISIBLE WORLD	
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